

YTS scheme to help ease nursing crisis

Up to 7,000 teenagers may work in hospitals

By Jill Sherman, Social Services Correspondent

A radical plan to create 7,000 Youth Training Scheme jobs in the health service each year to help ease the nursing crisis is being actively considered by the Government.

The scheme, which would mark the first national YTS programme in the health service and could involve 16-year-olds helping to care for patients in hospital wards, was supported by management consultants Price Waterhouse yesterday.

Earlier this year the consultants were commissioned by the Government to carry out a £100,000 feasibility study into the proposal after predictions of growing staff shortages.

However, Price Waterhouse concluded that although a health service YTS scheme could attract 7,000 entrants, only half of those would complete the scheme, and only 700 to 2,000 would go on into professional nursing training. Originally, it was hoped that more than 4,000 entrants would train as nurses.

Although some trainees might opt for other NHS professions, such as medical

laboratory work and physiotherapy - where there are also severe shortages - most trainees would take up unqualified support posts, the report predicted. Price Waterhouse also recommended that a similar scheme might be suitable for the social service.

Last night, the Royal College of Nursing said young teenagers could be put off the nursing profession altogether if they had to deal with distressing cases on the wards.

The National Union of Public Employees said trainees could become "a cheap pair of hands to help overcome the staffing crisis on the wards".

The Price Waterhouse report suggests that the trainees, who would be funded by the

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Manpower Services Commission, should be supplementary, though they would contribute to patient care.

They would be paid the standard MSC training allowance, though health authorities would be free to top this up. If they were offered employment during training they should get a wage equal to that of a nursing auxiliary, about £4,000 a year.

The report estimates that the cost of running a 60-place scheme in one district would be about £57,810, or £960 per trainee each year.

Although it recommends that most trainees could rotate in long-stay care areas, local housing units, day hospitals and outpatient departments in both care and administrative duties, it suggests that some youngsters could work in acute medicine and surgery wards, paediatrics, midwifery and in theatres.

Announcing the publication of the report, Mr Antony Newton, the Minister for Health, said the Government was now considering how to take the report's recommendations forward with the other commissioning bodies, the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing (UKCC), the NHS Training Authority and the MSC.

He emphasized that staff organizations would need to be consulted over any proposed changes.

"There are obvious potential difficulties in providing adequately supervised training programmes for youngsters where care is being given to sick people", Mr Newton said.

"The report suggests safeguards and makes innovative recommendations as to the ways in which those with aptitudes and abilities might be considered for nursing or other professional training."

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the 7,000 trainees would complement rather than substitute for nurses.

The Royal College of Nursing said that young teenagers should not be put on wards where they might have to deal with distressing incidents and disturbing patients.

"We are very concerned about the proposal to put YTS trainees in areas of clinical care. In many cases, they would have to care for the senile, incontinent, mentally ill, mentally handicapped and potentially violent patients", said a college spokesman.

"If you put young people into that area it may put them off rather than what their appetite."

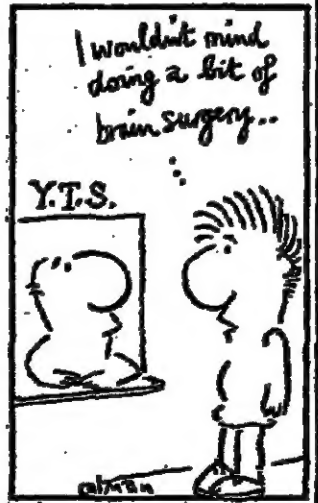
The spokesman said that a nursing cadet scheme introduced in the 1960s had failed to attract youngsters into the profession.

However, the College admitted that there was a need for a "Rolls Royce" national training scheme for the health service, provided that it was adequately supervised.

"We would encourage a comprehensive training scheme in the NHS, but trainees would need extensive supervision."

The UKCC, the regulatory body for nurses, said the council would discuss the implications of the report at its meeting on January 20.

"In general the council welcomes any opportunity to attract young people into the health service", Mr Colin Ralph, registrar and chief executive of the council, said.



Missing bride murder charge

By Stewart Tessler, Crime Reporter

John Camman, a Bristol businessman, was yesterday charged with the murder of Mrs Shirley Banks who vanished nearly three months ago after going on an evening shopping trip in central Bristol. Her body has never been found.

Mr Camman, aged 33, of Bridge Road, Leigh Woods, Bristol, appears before Bristol magistrates this morning.

Police said yesterday he had been charged with the murdering Mrs Banks in Bristol or elsewhere between October 7 and October 30.

Mrs Banks, aged 29, from

Clifton, Bristol, disappeared four weeks after getting married.

Mr Camman has already been charged with abducting Mrs Banks on October 8; stealing her Mini Clubman car between October 7 and October 31; attempting to abduct Julia Holman, aged 30, of Abbots Leigh, Bristol, on October 7 from a car park; assaulting Carmel Cleary, a Leamington Spa shop assistant, with intent to rob on October 29; and causing grievous bodily harm to a Sutton Coldfield woman in December 1980.

Dr David Cowan, associate director of the Drug Control Centre at King's College, London University, said: "Animal anabolics are likely to be dangerous for humans, partly because they are designed for animals."

"The dangers are many - anyone taking these steroids for more than two years is going into the unknown because we have not had the opportunity to examine the long-term effects on humans."

The known side-effects of anabolic steroids for humans included cancer of the liver, damage to the cardiovascular system, including hardening of the arteries, as well as breast growth in men.

Earlier this year it was reported that a bodybuilder from Basildon died from taking hormone drugs, and *The Times* recently spoke to a man who needed two chest operations since taking steroids; his family is waiting to see whether he has also developed cancer.

Dr Cowan also cited the case of a man of 38 who Continued on page 16, col 4

Perhaps I was unwise, says angry Gatting



Home to Heathrow: Mike Gatting and his wife, Elaine, after flying into London last night. (Photograph: Peter Trievnor)

Mike Gatting, the England cricket captain, returned to London yesterday after his team's ill-fated tour of Pakistan and was still indignant about events in the Faisalabad Test match.

"I have never been sworn at like that on the field, and certainly never called a cheat," he said when the team flew into Heathrow Airport. "That was the fuse that sparked the row that ruined the series."

"Perhaps I was unwise to become involved with Sha-koor Rana (the umpire), but I told him to get back to square one and carry on doing his job." The Test was halted when Rana demanded an apology and a day was lost before the Test and County Cricket Board ordered Gatting to offer an apology.

John Emburey, the vice-captain, said: "The second Test row had its origin in the first Test, where we were upset by several umpiring decisions."

Gatting said he had "a few more grey hairs" and Elaine, his wife, told him that there were bundles of letters of support at his north London home. The flight from Karachi, according to Gatting, "began with a huge cheer from the players".

Peter Lush, the tour manager, said: "I don't think our conduct has done anything to damage the game."

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Sportsmen injecting animal steroids

By John Goodbody and Howard Foster

British sportsmen are turning in increasing numbers to the potentially dangerous practice of injecting themselves with anabolic steroids intended only for animals.

An investigation by *The Times* has revealed that the animal drugs are entering the country both through an international smuggling network using British ports and remote airfields and also through a mail order business.

Information from a senior veterinary source and the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain shows that bulk-brought drugs are being brought into the country from the Republic of Ireland and Holland to enable unscrupulous farmers to increase the bodyweight of their animals. EEC legislation restricts such treatment.

Several dealers known to *The Times* include animal steroid injectable drugs on their price list to bodybuilders and sportsmen.

The four drugs most widely used are all made abroad but available on the black market here, in spite of warnings from drug experts that dosages can cause side-effects that can lead to death from any of several illnesses.

Dr David Cowan, associate director of the Drug Control Centre at King's College, London University, said: "Animal anabolics are likely to be dangerous for humans, partly because they are designed for animals."

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British Airways drops Caledonian image

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

The name British Caledonian is almost certain to disappear completely from the skies after the takeover of the Gatwick-based airline by British Airways, giving rise to speculation about the early departure of Sir Adam Thomson, chairman of B-Cal.

Despite earlier assurances from British Airways that the tartan image and name of the airline would be kept at least on charter operations, Sir Colin Marshall, British Airways chief executive, said yesterday that consideration was being given to dropping "British" from the title and making the name of a new merged charter operation simply "Caledonian".

Although this is the name Sir Adam first took when he started his fledgling airline in 1961, he had hoped to keep the British Caledonian name flying and had intended staying on to ensure that this happened.

Sir Adam's future is now in the balance and he is unlikely to stay for more than a few months in the new airline. His shares alone are worth about £3 million and he had always planned to take a long retirement, probably sailing his yacht in the Mediterranean once he had saved his ailing airline.

Plans are being urgently implemented to complete the integration of both staffs and services by March so that the new shape - British Airways operating all scheduled services and Caledonian flying charters from Gatwick - can be in place by the summer peak.

Top priority will be issuing British Airways' tickets for future Caledonian flights. Next will come the removal of all BAC 111 planes flown by British Caledonian to Europe from the routes and their replacement with more efficient and quieter Boeing 737s - with British Airways uniform staff on board.

Airlines of Britain, one of British Airways' small rivals, has formally asked the EEC Commission to block the takeover of British Caledonian on the grounds that it would breach European law on competition.

British Airways are convinced that now the merger has effectively taken place there is little the EEC can do but they have agreed to meet them in January to discuss their concerns.

Tougher Israelis put curb on riots

From Ian Murray, Jerusalem

The official death toll in the current violence in the occupied territories rose by three yesterday to 22, as Mr Yitzhak Rabin, the Defence Minister, toured the West Bank to see how the army was implementing its new get-tough policy.

More troops are being sent in to act more swiftly and firmly to deal with trouble. At the same time activists are to be rounded up, with more administrative detentions and deportations ordered to deprive the protest movement of its leadership.

Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister, made it clear on television that criticism of the way the disturbances were being handled would not change anything. "Security and order" sometimes take precedence over a beautiful image, he said.

The increase in manpower on the streets, including 2,300 extra police, appeared to have

reduced the number of demonstrations and a few shops opened in the old city of Jerusalem, which has been firmly shut for more than a week despite the tempting pre-Christmas trade.

But there were fierce clashes in Hebron, where two children, aged 10 and 15 were shot

and wounded, and at Jenin, where one demonstrator was seriously wounded. One of two who died in Jenin was an 18-year-old cripple, unable to walk except on sticks, who was hit in the head when the troops were ordered to open fire at demonstrators' legs.

Senior military personnel were summoned to Central Command on Monday evening to discuss the new measures.

Continued on page 16, col 4

Brent race inquiry in schools

By Sarah Thompson Education Reporter

A special independent inquiry into the racial equality programme in schools in the left-wing north London Borough of Brent was announced by Mr Douglas Hurd, the Home Secretary, yesterday.

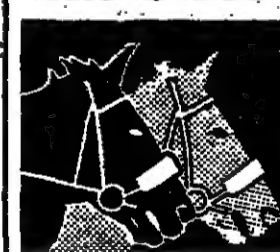
The inquiry, to be carried out by Sir David Lane, the former chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, will visit the borough next month.

He is to determine whether the council should receive a £2 million government grant towards salaries of 55 (originally to be 180) teachers employed in its Development Programme for Racial Equality. Teachers have accused the new staff of being "race spies" in their classrooms.

The inspection is being made at the invitation of Brent Council itself, but it also indicates ministers' dissatisfaction with the findings of a special schools inspectors' survey of Brent earlier this year, ordered by Mr Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Mr Nitim Parshotam, Brent's education chairman, said: "The inspectors found no evidence that our race policies were resulting in difficulties in our schools."

Boxing Day sport in The Times



Eight racecards and full previews of the football, Rugby Union and Rugby League matches head sports coverage in the only quality newspaper publishing on Boxing Day. It will also contain the Christmas Quiz and the Jumbo Crossword, plus New Year radio and television. Use the form on page 3 today to order your Times

IN PART 2 £275,000 bet

Barney Curley, the Newmarket trainer, is on the point of winning a £275,000 bet after the victory of his horse Experimenting at Folkestone yesterday. Page 38

Portfolio

There is £8,000 to be won today in The Times Portfolio Gold competition, double the usual amount as there was no winner yesterday. Portfolio list, page 23.

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Auction rivals line up Christie's takeover bid

By Sarah Jane Checkland Art Market Correspondent and Carol Leonard, City Staff

Christie's the auctioneers may go under the hammer itself early in the new year in a takeover battle. Talk in the City and the art market is that two aggressive bidders are actively stalking the company.

Yesterday's announcement that Mr Christopher Davidge has been appointed deputy group managing director was interpreted in some quarters as a board strengthening operation. The newly created post will prepare him for a takeover fight.

Both a Swiss conglomerate and Phillips, the auctioneers, are thought to be preparing bids. The Swiss company is known to have expressed

an interest in the past, and is thought now to be ready for the attack.

Phillips let its interest be known just over a year ago. It is an unlikely suitor at first glance, having achieved an annual turnover this year of £77.6 million to Christie's £58.1 million in the last season alone, as well as being disdained by the snobbish element in Christie's.

But there are practical arguments for a merger between David and Goliath. United, Phillips and Christie's could give Sotheby's a run for its money.

Mr Davidge became a director of Christie's King Street in 1971, and managing director of that company in 1985. He is also chairman of White Brothers, a printing company. He is

regarded as a natural candidate for the international job in question.

Before the stock market crash in October, Christie's shares had risen to a 1987 high of 744p. Then they plunged to 290, but they have now recovered to 394p.

It is generally thought that, if there is to be a takeover, it should be sooner rather than later. Both suitors appear to be shadow boxing, with Phillips believed to be keen that the Swiss declare their hand first.

Mr Christopher Weston, chairman of Phillips, said last night: "If you had asked me a week ago I could have said more," but that he was no longer in a position to comment. Another source close to the company said: "It is a hot subject."

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NEWS ROUNDUP

Currys fined over 'Japanese' label

Currys, the high street electrical group, was fined £4,000 with £2,500 costs yesterday for misleading the public into thinking products were made in Japan.

Oxford magistrates decided that the firm had infringed the trade description law by giving goods made in Britain, Italy, Yugoslavia and Korea the name "Matsui" with a symbol resembling the rising sun. The company sold the goods under the slogan: "Japanese technology made perfect". The company was found guilty on 10 counts of contravening the Trade Description Act. Two charges were dismissed.

The prosecution was brought by Oxfordshire and West Sussex County Council trading standards departments and was seen as a test case. Other high street retailers may now face similar prosecutions.

Mr Nicholas Lightowler, purchasing director for Currys and Dixons, denied in court that the slogan "directly or indirectly" implied that the products were made in Japan.

MP leaves Alert over hospital children

Mr Tony Benn, Labour MP for Chesterfield, was discharged from hospital yesterday after undergoing minor surgery on Monday.

He left St Charles's Hospital, in North Kensington, west London, for his home in Holland Park near by after an overnight stay.

The hospital refused to disclose for what Mr Benn, aged 62, had been treated. In 1981, he suffered from Guillain-Barre syndrome, acute inflammation of the nerves, affecting the legs. The disease causes muscular weakness.

Village hunt ban fails

Residents of a village where a stag climbed on to a cottage roof to escape stalkers have failed to get a hunt banned under the Public Order Act.

Families at Hawkcombe, near Porlock, Somerset, sheltered the red deer when it was pursued into their village by the hunt, the Devon and Somerset Staghounds.

The villagers petitioned the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset, urging him to ban the New Year's Day hunt from the village under the 1986 Public Order Act.

However, Chief Supt Michael Challes, in charge of the West Somerset police, said that the hunt's activities did not fall within the provision of the Act relating to processions and assemblies and he had no power to impose a ban.

Police search

Police launched a search yesterday for a man they describe as armed and highly dangerous. Andrew Longmire, aged 31, is sought by three forces for questioning about 14 rapes and 23 violent assaults.

He is said to be well built, 6ft, and sometimes wears a beard. He disappeared from his home in Manchester in November, and drives a Morris Marina van (YCB 572M).

Army investigation

Five Army recruits are being held under arrest while Special Branch officers investigate allegations of brutality at the training depot for the seven regiments of the King's Division.

The recruits, all in their sixth week of basic training at Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Srenall, near York, are alleged to have assaulted a soldier in a barrackroom on December 12 and 13. The soldier was examined by a doctor on the camp but required no further medical treatment. The Army said: "It was more of an alleged affray than anything else".

Repeal for unwitting bigamists

By David Sapsted

The Lord Chancellor's office admitted yesterday that it was responsible for "an unfortunate oversight" in the drafting of divorce laws which had resulted in hundreds of Britons becoming unwitting bigamists in the past two years.

Legislation is to be introduced in the House of Lords early in the new year to remedy the mistake, which involves people who got a certain type of county court divorce and had remarried.

The error came to light last week when a divorce was declared null and void in the High Court.

The reason was that the 1986 Matrimonial Causes (Amendment) Rules failed to stipulate that when a defended divorce - which must be heard in the High Court - suddenly became undefended, and was consequently referred to a county court, then the lower court's decree had to be sent back to the High Court for validation.

The Lord Chancellor's Department said that in such cases people were not technically bigamists.

D-notice role to get support

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

The Government is expected to reassure the independent D-Notice Committee that it fully supports its role in advising the media on issues of national security.

A statement is to be made soon after Christmas after criticism by the press members of the committee over the Government's ban on the BBC Radio programme, *My Country Right or Wrong*. The ban was imposed even though the BBC consulted Rear Admiral William Higgins, the secretary of the D-Notice Committee.

Whitehall sources said yesterday that the Government had no wish for the committee to disband since it served a useful function.

The sources said that the Government's present fight over the principle of confidentiality within the Civil Service, and in particular the Security Service, did not affect the D-Notice Committee in any way.

Its role, the sources said, was to advise the media on issues relating to national security. Yesterday the injunction granted to the Attorney General earlier this month, preventing *My Country Right*

or *Wrong* from being broadcast, was "narrowed significantly" by a High Court judge to bring the BBC in line with the rest of the media.

After a 45-minute private hearing Mr Justice Roush relayed the ban on interviews with current or former members of the security service.

Radio Stockholm, an independent Swedish radio station, is broadcasting daily extracts from Mr Peter Wright's book, *Spycatcher*. The station can be received on the medium waveband in parts of Scotland.

Maxwell freezes launch of football magazine

By Alan Hamilton

Mr Robert Maxwell, the millionaire publisher who has been thwarted in his attempts to take control of Watford football club on his own terms, appears to have wavered his anger at the sport by aborting plans to launch a weekly football magazine for teenagers.

The magazine, *Striker*, was to have appeared on January 16, and was intended to appeal to fans in the 17-17 age group.

Mr Bill Day, the editor, and

his staff of nine, were told abruptly on Monday night by executives of Mr Maxwell's Fleetway Publications subsidiary that publication would not go ahead as planned.

Mr Maxwell's personal office confirmed yesterday that *Striker* would not be published as intended, but would give no reason; a decision on its future would be made at a later date. Asked why his magazine had suddenly been put on ice, Mr Day said: "It is a very difficult situation. I cannot say anything."

The Football League told Mr Maxwell that he could buy Watford from Elton John, the pop singer, only if he relinquished his interest in Derby County, of which he is chairman, Oxford United, of which his son Kevin is chairman, and Reading, in which he owns a major stake.

Another more immediate reason for the freeze on *Striker* could be the continuing success of *Shoot!*, the rival weekly which has a circulation of more than 200,000.

Life Guards captain loses final Swedish appeal

By Michael McCarthy

Simon Hayward, the Life Guards captain convicted in Sweden of drug smuggling, was refused leave yesterday to appeal to the Swedish Supreme Court against a five-year jail sentence.

His mother, Mrs Hazel Hayward, said: "We are devastated. He is innocent. There is no doubt about that." She said her son's case would be taken before the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, which has power to comment on or censure but not to overturn the Swedish proceedings.

However, Hayward, aged 32, who is still in the British Army, faces a more immediate battle to save his commission. Under Army General Administrative Instructions, his commanding officer will make a recommendation on his future, which will go through the chain of command to be considered by the Army Board.

In normal circumstances, an officer convicted of such a serious criminal offence would automatically expect to be discharged. However, Hayward's conviction was not under British law and he still

has a considerable body of support in his regiment.

Colonel Andrew Parker-Bowles, commanding officer of the Household Cavalry, said yesterday: "We will support him. We will support his case forward, but we think there are various mitigating circumstances in the trial. The great majority within the Household Cavalry think he is innocent."

It will be several weeks before Hayward's case is considered. His solicitors, Kingsley Napley, will advance the argument that the evidence before the Swedish

courts would not have convicted him in Britain and should therefore not be the basis for his being deprived of his commission.

Hayward was being held at the Kronoberg detention centre, Stockholm, where he is expected to spend Christmas in solitary confinement. A prison board next Monday will decide where he will be sent. He could expect to be free in September 1989, with time off for good behaviour.

Mrs Hayward, who tried in vain to telephone her son, said: "To be honest we didn't really think the Supreme

Court would do anything but turn down his appeal.

"I don't think it's possible for him to have a fair trial in Sweden; it's become a major issue there. I think he has proved beyond doubt that he is innocent and I think the Swedes know that too", she said.

Hayward was arrested by Swedish drug squad officers last March after driving from Ibiza, Spain, in a Jaguar car belonging to his brother, Christopher, worth £500,000, hidden in the door sills. He

has consistently protested his innocence, claiming that his brother asked him to drive the car to Sweden to sell it.

However, he was convicted at the Upsala District Court after a two-week trial last August. The Stockholm Court of Appeal confirmed the verdict last month.

Mr Christopher Murray, of Kingsley Napley, said: "There are several *prima facie* instances where the European Convention on Human Rights has been flagrantly disregarded. We have no intention of letting the matter rest."

IRA murder of top judge 'an act of depravity'

By John Cooney

The murder by the IRA of Lord Chief Justice Maurice Gibson and his wife Cecily in a car bomb attack was condemned yesterday by a coroner as "an act of depravity".

So bad were the burns that Sir Maurice, aged 73, and Lady Cecily, aged 67, could only be identified by reference to dental records, the coroner's inquest in Banbridge, Co Down, was told.

Mr Daniel Thompson, the coroner, found that they died immediately as a result of grievous multiple injuries caused by the bomb explosion last April 25 at Killeen, just inside the Northern Ireland border.

They had been escorted from Dublin to the Province by Irish police.

Mr Thompson said he was compelled to comment on what he described as the savage murder of an elderly couple.

It was a crime not only in the eyes of the State, but by its callousness it was a crime against humanity.

"Any person playing any part in such a murder is depraved. But the deliberate murder of an elderly judge and his wife is not only an act of depravity, it is the action of people who wish to create an anarchic society in which wickedness will go unpunished", he said.

Sir Maurice and Lady Cecily were returning from a holiday in England to their home in Belfast. After leaving a car ferry at Dun Laoghaire, near Dublin, they were escorted to the border by Irish police.

Several witnesses told the court yesterday how they saw a car parked beside the main Dublin/Newry road on the Northern side of the border, shortly before the explosion at about 8.25am.

Lady Gibson was driving the blue Ford Escort when the

bomb went off as they passed the parked car.

The force of the explosion blew the Gibsons' car across the road. It came to rest on the opposite hard shoulder facing in the direction of the Irish Republic.

The blast left a crater nearly 20 feet in diameter and six feet deep.

The two bodies were so charred by the explosion and by the flames that they could not be immediately identified and rescue equipment had to be used by firemen to free them.

On the basis of autopsy reports the coroner said that the burning of the bodies occurred after death.

Dr David Irwin, an Irish international rugby player, said that he was driving to Dublin for a training session with team-mates Mr Nigel Carr and Mr Philip Rainey when he was caught by the blast. He told the coroner he could not recall the Gibsons' car travelling along the road towards him.

Dr Irwin said he had passed a garage south of Newry when the explosion took place. "I felt a lot of heat and noise. The front windscreen shattered and the car stopped."

Dr Irwin said he spoke to Mr Carr, who was groaning in the front seat beside him. He had a cut on his forehead. One of his legs was caught by the dashboard being pushed inwards.

"I looked at Philip in the back", Dr Irwin said. "He was badly dazed but I could see he was not hurt."

"I got out of the car and saw a light blue car in flames about eight yards behind but a bit to the left."

"I saw one passenger in the car in the front seat but I could not see anyone else."

The fire was so intense that he could not get near the Gibsons' car.

A turkey for Thatcher



By John Young

The Prime Minister shows off a 35 lb fresh turkey presented to her in Downing Street yesterday by Mr Tony Burton of the British Turkey Federation and his wife Dot. They raised the bird on their farm in Royston, Hertfordshire.

More than 10 million turkeys will be eaten in Britain over the Christmas holiday, totalling more than a third of annual production. Prices range from less than 50p a lb for frozen to about £1.20 a lb for top quality fresh birds. The Min-

istry of Agriculture said it is essential to allow all frozen poultry to thaw completely before cooking. A 10lb turkey needs at least 24 hours to thaw at room temperature.

The liquid from thawing, which may contain bacteria should be disposed of carefully and not allowed to contaminate other food, and hands should be thoroughly washed after touching uncooked meat. Leftovers should be eaten cold or fully reheated and not simply reheated.

RUC wins backing of 72%

Most people in Northern Ireland think the Royal Ulster Constabulary does a good job, but serious crime in the province has risen sharply, according to a report published yesterday.

A survey of 6,000 people showed that 72 per cent thought the RUC did a good job.

However, the report, *A Commentary on Northern Ireland Crime Statistics 1986*, by the Northern Ireland Office, said that the rate for serious crimes, including murder, attempted murder, robbery and sexual offences, was higher than in seven police force areas in England and Wales with a similar population.

The Home Office announced yesterday that police forces in Bedfordshire, Devon and Cornwall, Essex, Gwent, Northamptonshire, Sussex, Thames Valley and West Mercia are to get more men.

B-Cal staff meet their new 'boss'

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Sir Colin Marshall, chief executive of British Airways, swept into the glass headquarters of British Caledonian yesterday morning - three hours before the airlines were officially merged.

Throughout B-Cal, there was a stunned air of disbelief that they had been taken over by British Airways, mixed with relief that uncertainty about the future was over, at least for the airline as a whole.

What is eventually to become of B-Cal staff will depend on the decisions taken by a special task force, which is expected to comb through the work of every department.

When Sir Colin arrived shortly before 9 am, senior managers, who only the day before had been preparing for a future under SAS, knew the battle had been lost.

While they waited to be summoned to a meeting with Sir Colin, someone suggested a game of Monopoly.

In other offices, documents covering the 26 years of the airline's history were being shredded to make way for new ones.

The first group to meet Sir Colin, Mr Gordon Dunlop, finance director of British Airways, and Mr Peter Owen, operations director, were the B-Cal directors. As is usual in take-overs, they all resigned and a new board was agreed.

Then it was the turn of the senior managers, taken from their game of Monopoly.

"He seems very nice, very genuine and does not want his team to move in like a herd of elephants", said one.

Like most of his colleagues, he is planning a holiday to recover from the effects of the last few weeks - but in spite of the airline's problems, most flights are booked solid and there is little chance of a seat.

After the managers came the union leaders - a much tougher group altogether, ready to question their new employer hard.

"We listened politely to what he had to say", said an engineering union representative, "but we are going to want answers to a lot of questions when next we meet."

Those questions will include the future of the hard-won B-Cal employee scheme, *The Way Ahead*. In return for a no-strike and no overtime agreement, the scheme provides staff with annual salaries well above those of their opposite numbers at Heathrow.

"This could be a real obstacle", the union man said. Sir Colin was beaming as he left, pausing only to put his arm affectionately around a large model of a B-Cal DC10, now part of his fleet.

"It was all most encouraging", he said. "There is a lot to do, and we hope the staff will come up with as many ideas of their own for the future as we will."

Industry moves to create city jobs

By Ronald Faux
Employment Affairs
Correspondent

The Government's enterprise zone experiment to attract industry to 23 problem urban areas was judged a qualified success yesterday.

The scheme has directly created 35,000 jobs at a cost of £297 million, according to reports published by the Department of the Environment.

Derelict inner city zones have been greatly improved but the department admits that since the first zone was set up in 1981 more cost-effective ways of creating jobs have been found. Plans to extend the network have been halted for the time being.

In enterprise zones, businesses can be set up rates-free and enjoy capital allowances and automatic qualification for grants.

One of the reports, by PA Cambridge Economic Consultants, found that of the 63,000 jobs in the zones more than half were as a direct consequence of the enterprise zone policy. Nearly 13,000 more jobs in neighbouring communities had also been created.

The PA report found no immediately damaging effects on the surrounding economy when it studied the impact of Swansea enterprise zone on other retail centres in West Glamorgan.

Forty acres of derelict land are to be transformed into an international ice rink, new homes and shops with the grant of £2.5 million, one of the largest urban regeneration grants awarded in the Government's drive to improve run-down areas (Richard Ford writes).

The ice rink will be the first stage of the redevelopment proposed for the site alongside the Leeds to Liverpool canal at Blackburn, Lancashire. An *Evaluation of the Enterprise Zone Experiment* (PA Cambridge Economic Consultants, Stationery Office, £13.50). *Enterprise Zone Information 1983-1986* (Department of the Environment, Stationery Office, £7.50).

Inner city land call, page 4

MEP is fined £100 for theft of thermostat

Barry Seal, Labour Member of the European Parliament for Yorkshire West, was convicted yesterday of shoplifting and fined £100 with £675 prosecution costs.

Judge Herrod, QC, told him: "This must be a very sad day because you have thrown away a lifetime of hard work, honesty and integrity."

Seal, who earns £22,500 a year, was found guilty of stealing an £8.99 hot-water thermostat by a jury at Leeds Crown Court after a two-day trial. He looked shaken and stared at the floor as the verdict was announced.

Seal, of Brookfields Farm, Wike, Bradford, had denied stealing from the B&Q store on the Euroway Trading Estate in Bradford last February.

He was carrying £90 when he put the thermostat in his pocket. He later told police: "It's an item I didn't even need."

During the three overseas trips Seal has made since he was elected MEP in 1984, he has visited 12 countries and 10 cities. He has a private jet, a helicopter and a car. He has a net worth of £100,000. Seal, 40, is married and has two children. He is a member of the Conservative Party.



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ALL MERCHANDISE IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. SOME LINES ARE AVAILABLE AT LARGER BRANCHES ONLY.

Campaign for home subsidies reform as repossessions soar

By Christopher Warran, Property Correspondent

A call for an end to mortgage subsidies for "champagne yuppies" at the expense of first-time buyers was made yesterday as the London Labour Party launched a new housing campaign.

Mr Nick Raynsford, former Labour MP for Fulham, said that urgent reforms were vital if young couples were to have any chance of buying their own homes in London's property market.

His call came on the day the Institute of Housing published a report showing that the number of households losing their homes through failure to keep up mortgage loan payments has reached record levels this year.

The total of repossessions in the first half of the year was 11,620 and the institute estimates that since then they have been running at about 2,000 a month. That will give a yearly number of nearly 24,000 for 1987, an increase of 3,000 over last year's total of 20,960.

Mr Raynsford was announcing the London Labour Party campaign which aims to attack what it describes as the Conservatives' bad housing record and the implications of the Housing Bill, now being debated in Parliament.

He said the present system of mortgage tax relief was absurd because it helped people owning homes worth £250,000 but was inadequate to help young couples on modest incomes, struggling to get a foothold on the private housing ladder.

He said: "There is an overwhelming case for reform. Reports by the Duke of Edinburgh and the Archbishop of Canterbury have both said this. Help should be concentrated on those people who

cannot afford to buy, instead of giving it to City yuppies to buy a few more bottles of champagne."

The campaign is to set up a policy review body to analyse London's housing problems and produce a report.

An article for the January/February issue of the institute of Housing's magazine, *Housing*, estimates that in addition to the number of repossessions there will be 50,400 loans in arrears by between six and 12 months, compared with 45,720 last year. Loans in arrears by more than 12 months will be 13,720, compared with 11,520 last year.

Of the total of about seven million loans, the number of homes lost through a failure to keep up mortgage payments represents about 0.3 per cent.

The article gives four main reasons for the increase in possession in recent years, from a total of 3,000 in 1980. First, rising house prices and higher percentages of incomes needed to pay mortgages. Second, the moving of owner occupation down the income scale through people being forced into buying a house by the lack of rented accommodation.

Third, the greater incidence of marital breakdowns; and fourth, the increasing number of people who have secondary charges on homes for improvements, such as double glazing, which they have taken out with companies which have high interest rates and are quick to repossess.

The article says the rise in possessions has had serious consequences for local authorities, who may have to pick up the pieces through homeless-

ness legislation. Five per cent of those accepted as homeless in 1979 became so because they could not pay the mortgage, a figure that has increased this year to 12 per cent.

The institute points out that some local authorities' policies on mortgage defaulters are in direct conflict with the interests of those in arrears. Most people who cannot keep up their mortgage payments are advised by building societies to sell before their homes are repossessed, yet some authorities say that families who sell are not homeless, even though the money left from the sale is unlikely to be enough to buy another property.

In addition, if homes do get repossessed, the families concerned run the risk of being declared intentionally homeless by councils.

To deal with people in mortgage difficulties, the article suggests that building societies should make sure that people can realistically afford their mortgage and spell out the pitfalls as well as the advantages of owner occupation.

It is estimated that staff costs for dealing with arrears and repossessions are around £16 million a year. The institute believes some of that money could be more positively used by investing it in independent money advice and debt counselling services.

Local authorities, too, should adopt less punitive policies towards families made homeless through repossession, the article concludes.

Leading article, page 9

New roots put down at Kew



By John Young

Mr Arthur Bell, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, planting a sticky locust (*Robinia viscaria*) yesterday, after hearing that the Government was to provide the gardens with a further £250,000 for clearance and replacement of trees destroyed by the severe storm on October 16.

Mr John MacGregor, Minister of Agriculture, who announced the extra funding during a visit to the gardens, said

the storm had had a serious impact across the country on trees of all sorts, but the damage and destruction at Kew, in south-west London, had been particularly distressing because of the trees' value in scientific, aesthetic and historical terms.

The sticky locust, one of five species introduced to the gardens from Kew's own nursery yesterday, was raised from seed collected in the Appalachian Mountains, Shenandoah National Park, United States.

Other trees planted in yesterday's ceremony were an Eastern liquidambar (*Liquidambar orientalis*), donated by the Ataturk Arboretum, in Turkey; an Oriental spruce (*Picea orientalis*), from seed collected in the Turkish mountains near Iktidare; and from the United States, a Nuttall oak (*Quercus nuttallii*), given by the Missouri Arboretum, Louisiana; and a Red ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), from seed collected in Burlington County, New Jersey. (Photograph: Peter Trivelpy)

Police Christmas campaign

Nine out of 6,000 fail breath tests

By Daniel Ward and Sam Kiley

Police road blocks are proving a strong deterrent to drivers who drink in the days before Christmas.

In Warwickshire, only nine of the 6,000 motorists stopped by police at road checks have failed breath tests.

Yesterday Mr Peter Joslin, the county's Chief Constable, said he was encouraged to see that the message about not drinking and driving was being hammered home.

More than 10 per cent of the vehicles stopped were defective and 187 drivers face prosecution with a further 450 cautioned.

Warwickshire police will continue to stop drivers at afternoon and evening road blocks until the New Year.

Large numbers of drivers were stopped by Sussex police after 11 pm on main roads around Brighton last Saturday. Only 20 drivers failed

breath tests compared with more than 40 for the same period last year.

Inspector Dick Horner, of Sussex police, said: "We feel the anti-drink drive campaign is working and people are heeding the warning. Motorists are acting very responsibly."

In Avon and Somerset, the police are "very pleased" with the way motorists have responded to the campaign.

All motorists involved in accidents or stopped by the police for traffic offences are being breath-tested this week.

A spokesman said: "We have been giving quite a number of breath tests and only a low percentage are positive."

"Motorists have taken a responsible attitude so far and we hope this will continue throughout the Christmas and New Year period."

However positive breath tests on drivers were up 100 per cent in Wiltshire last

weekend, according to police figures.

Mr Donald Smith, Chief Constable, said he was "disappointed and concerned" that 14 people had given positive readings when they were breath tested on Saturday. One person was killed and seven injured in drink related accidents.

"These figures are particularly distressing when so many agencies are making efforts to publicize the fact that there is no need to drink and drive and no need to put themselves, and others, at risk," Mr Smith said.

He said he would "strongly enforce" anti-drink driving legislation.

Merseyside police report a slight drop in the number of people arrested on suspicion of drinking and driving. There were 21 arrests last weekend compared with 27 a year ago.

Inspector Phil Johnson said: "We think the message is getting through."

Research for the Government's £2.5 million anti-drink drive television campaign has shown that among the drivers most likely to drink, there is a clear understanding of the legal alcohol limit, but they feel safe at or above the limit.

There is also little perceived risk of having an accident, and the feeling that drinking was a problem, but only for other drivers.

Mrs Barbara Castle, the former transport minister who introduced the breathalyser, called for random breath tests in the war on drink driving.

Doctors in Ireland yesterday called on Christmas revellers to deflate their friends' car tyres to stop them drinking and driving. "Four flat tyres in the morning is better than four people in the hospital or morgue," they said.

Late-night revellers in Glasgow can travel home free at Christmas and Hogmanay on buses sponsored by a brewery.

Warning on sports sell-off

By John Spicer

The Government's plan to sell off local authority sports and leisure centres will mean higher prices and facilities not being available when most people want them, according to the National Union of Public Employees (Nup).

It would also mean the neglect of centres in poorer areas and cause holiday schemes for schoolchildren to be abandoned.

The criticisms were made in the union's response to the Department of Environment's consultation paper on plans to offer sports and leisure centres for tender. Nup, which has nearly 700,000 members in low-paid public jobs, represents staff in sports and recreation.

The union's comments highlight the dangers of running centres on the exclusive basis of "profit rather than need".

In its written submission to the Government, Nup says it has always been committed to the promotion of easily accessible public facilities for sports and leisure.

The union says it does not like the way the Government has introduced compulsory competitive tendering in sports and leisure management "at the very last moment... tacked on to the Local Government Bill".

The union says that not even Tory authorities support the idea. "Very few centres have been contracted out but those that have show a pattern of corner-cutting through shorter opening hours and fewer staff", it says.

The submission warns the Government that privatization proposals will lead to "a tortuous and expensive bureaucratic web".

Anderton says his image cost him Yard job

Mr James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, said yesterday that he believed his image had cost him the job he most wanted.

"My ambition was to become the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, but I don't see that happening now", he told the *Manchester Evening News*.

"I felt it was a job that I could do, but the larger my public profile became, the further away I felt I was getting from that top job."

He said that he resembled being cast as a crank. "Some of my critics want to portray me as a Bible-thumping, baton-swinging, anti-working class, right-wing dictator." Instead, he described himself as "the people's policeman".

Mr Anderton gave the newspaper interview before the dispute over remarks he was reported to have made to a magazine.

Psychology of the shopper analysed

By John Spicer

Shoppers may soon know why they enter a supermarket and buy something they did not want but come out without getting what they went in for.

A three-year study has been launched by Stirling University and a market consultancy firm to look into consumer behaviour.

It is aimed at finding out how people make their shopping choices, why they change their minds and what influences them.

The research, which is being sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council, will also give retailers an insight into the psychology of shopping.

Mr Jef Harris, managing director of Harris International Marketing, the firm undertaking interviews involving thousands of shoppers, said: "Retail grocery shopping is now worth £30 billion a year."

"Although we have 10 years' data in our computers, there has been little research into 'intention to buy'."

Mr Harris said that with a stable population and a very much lower percentage of housekeeping money now needed for food, shopping has become "sensitive".

"For example, it used to be normal for supermarkets to put sweets and other goodies near checkout desks so that children would see them as

their mothers paid the bill. That idea is changing.

"Supermarket owners are realising that the idea could be counter-productive with mothers going elsewhere if, for financial or other reasons, they did not want to buy sweets or be influenced in such an obvious way."

The competitive conditions at supermarkets are at cut-throat levels, Mr Harris said.

Both shoppers and the shop owners will benefit from knowing what customers do and why, once they get inside the store.

Several thousand shoppers will be interviewed twice a year both as they go into a shop and when they come out.

A researcher has been appointed to work with Professor John Dawson, of the Institute of Retail Studies at Stirling University.

Professor Dawson said the influence of children in supermarkets was important and interesting but has never been studied.

He said: "Preliminary research has shown that the presence of children has a big bearing on their mothers' purchases. We would like to know how and why."

"We also want to know why people go in supermarkets specifically to buy one or two items and come out with many others."

Drinker is killed on walk home

A catering student was killed when he was hit by two cars as he walked home from a party because he did not want to drink and drive.

Mr Hallam, aged 18, was found dead on arrival at hospital after the crash on a dimly lit stretch of road.

Although he had passed his driving test the previous week and had his own car, Martin Hallam had decided to leave it at home when he went for a pre-Christmas drink.

As he walked home after a party he was struck by a Ford Sierra and a Volkswagen Golf on the A52 near Wharton, Nottinghamshire.

Mr Leo Hallam, his father, who runs the Cranmer Arms in the village of Aslockton near by, said last night his son had walked to the party as it was only in the next village.

Drink-drive MP banned for a year

By Andrew Morgan

Robin Corbett, the Labour MP, was banned from driving for 12 months yesterday after he pleaded guilty to driving with excess alcohol in his bloodstream.

Corbett, an Opposition home affairs spokesman and MP for Birmingham, Erdington, was also fined £300 by magistrates in Clerkenwell, central London.

Mr Michael Davis, for the prosecution, said that Corbett was stopped by police in Chevington Road, central London, earlier this month, after being seen to go through a red traffic light.

A breathalyser test showed he had 53 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath and 122 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood. The legal limits are 35

microgrammes and 80 milligrammes respectively.

Mr Bernard Simons, for Corbett, said the MP had spent the evening at the Houses of Parliament. "During the course of the evening he had a meal in the House. He had no more than two or three glasses of wine. He is normally extremely careful about drinking and driving and he genuinely believed he was not over the limit."

Mr Simons told the court that Corbett travelled between 20,000 and 25,000 miles a year between his constituency, the Commons and his home in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire.

Mrs Val Corbett, the MP's wife, said: "It's a pity, but the law is a good one and he broke it."

Eighteen top age for drunks

More than 4,700 or 7 per cent of the 68,000 people found guilty of drunkenness or cautioned for it in 1986 in England and Wales were aged under 18, according to official figures published yesterday.

The peak age for offending for both men and women was 18. The number of male offenders aged under 18 has fallen in the past two years and in 1986 was lower than in 1981.

As in previous years, the highest rates of offenders per 100,000 population were in the Metropolitan Police District, Merseyside, Northumbria, South Yorkshire, Gwent and South Wales.

Home Office Statistical Bulletin, *Offences of Drunkenness, England and Wales, 1986* (Statistical Department Home Office, Lunar House, Croydon, Surrey CR0 9YD; £2.50).

Man's feat of strength failed to save life

A man told an inquest yesterday how he lifted a huge oak tree which crashed down trapping a young woman during the gales two months ago.

Mr David Nurse, aged 40, 6 ft 6 in tall and weighing nineteen and a half stones, propped up the thick trunk with his knee and dragged Susan Galle, aged 27, from beneath it.

But she died two days later in hospital from head injuries, an inquest at Hammersmith, west London, was told.

Mr Nurse was trying to secure a houseboat on a canal towpath in Cowley, Middlesex, as the storm raged.

A gust lifted him off his feet and he clung to a boat rail. Then he saw the tree fall on Miss Galle and was able to clamber off the boat.

Mr Nurse said: "I do not know how I did it but I managed to prop up the trunk with my knee. If the full weight had fallen on her it would have crushed her."

Dr John Burton, the coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death.

A coroner's officer said after the hearing: "Mr Nurse acted in a very heroic way. He exerted amazing strength and needed hospital treatment for torn muscles afterwards."

Three fined £17,000 over TSB shares

Three men were fined a total of £17,075 yesterday at Bow Street Magistrates' Court, London, after they made multiple applications for TSB shares.

The court heard they were caught after the TSB sent out a questionnaire querying their applications.

Lionel Pyke, aged 57, a glazier, of Chapel Lane, Uxbridge, west London, who applied for 18,400 shares, was fined £6,200. Stephen Kempton, aged 27, a managing director, of Oaks Road, Kenley, Croydon, who applied for 13,300 shares, was fined £6,125.

Anthony Davenport, aged 55, a market-maker of Dewey Heath Road, Benfleet, Essex, who applied for 33,000 shares, was fined £4,750.

Horsebox fine for Champion

Bob Champion, the former jockey whose battle with cancer was portrayed in the film *Champions*, was fined £40 by St Albans magistrates yesterday after reversing a horsebox down a slip-road on the M25.

Champion, aged 39, of Green Farm, Timworth, near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, wrote to the court that he had a slow puncture and that a horsebox with a flat tyre would have added to the congestion on the motorway.

Wife charged

Monica Hopwood, aged 33, was remanded in custody by magistrates in Guildford, Surrey, yesterday charged with murdering her husband David, at their home in Swallow Close, Milford, near Guildford.

Cracker alert

The Consumer Protection Department said yesterday that some Christmas crackers could prove lethal. Tests on 14 boxes bought in Barnsley, South Yorkshire, showed that most crackers were potential fire hazards.

Oaksey decree

Lord Oaksey, the TV racing commentator and former jockey, was divorced yesterday by his wife, Victoria, after 28 years of marriage. The London Divorce Court granted her an uncontested divorce on the ground of his adultery.

Charge denied

Joe Lydon, the Rugby League international aged 24 who plays for Wigan, yesterday denied indecently assaulting a woman aged 20 in a public house when he appeared before Wigan magistrates. He was bailed to appear on January 29.

VC10 record

An RAF VC10 landed at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire yesterday after non-stop flights to and from the Falklands in a record 14 hours 58 minutes.

Stars and Stripes find

Flag design on a sword belt

By Norman Hammond, Archaeology Correspondent

The earliest known depiction of the Stars and Stripes, the United States flag, has been found by archaeologists working on a Revolutionary War encampment in New Jersey.

The camp was occupied for only six months, so the depiction can be precisely dated to a period after the stars and stripes design was approved by the Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

The discovery was made at Pluckemin Cantonment by Dr John Seidel, a professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

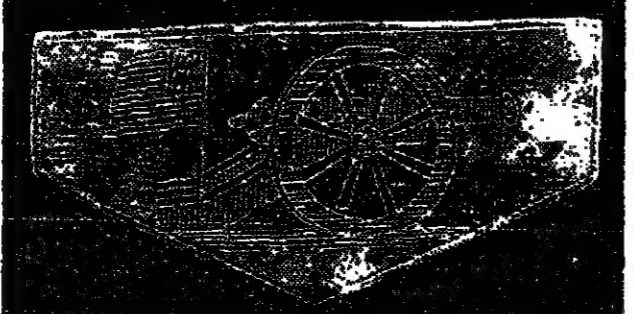
The United States flag, with 13 stars and 13 stripes to symbolize the number of

rebellious colonies that had joined to form the new nation, was found engraved on two similar brass plates, which Dr Seidel believes to be part of a sword belt harness passing over the shoulder.

The plates are three inches across, and on each the flag, flying from a staff, stands beside a cannon. The design is similar to that found on artillery men's buttons at Pluckemin but on those the design is too corroded to tell whether details of the stars and stripes were shown. The plates, however, are in excellent condition.

The making of the brass plates can be dated between the spring of 1779 arrived.

Dr Seidel said that the plates and thousands of other finds from the Pluckemin excavations are destined for the New Jersey State Museum in Trenton.



A brass plate from the Revolutionary War camp showing the earliest depiction found of the American flag.

British adopt incentive schemes

By Ruth Gledhill

Companies in Britain are turning to American-style incentive schemes to increase profits and to motivate their staff.

Up to 70 per cent of companies are believed to be operating some form of incentive schemes. The schemes have been a big factor in turning loss-making companies into going concerns.

In a new report into the effectiveness of incentive schemes, Miss Sue Gosschalk of Hay Management Consultants, examined the schemes operated by 21 companies including the Burton Group, the Abbey National Building Society and Kellogg.

She said: "People are motivated by money and by a recognition of their achievements. One company gave its senior management pay bonuses worth 50 per cent of their salary. This scheme was not successful because it was not related to performance."

"When the pot of gold is offered it will turn people's heads, if it is sufficiently large. But companies must make sure that the incentives turn people's heads in the right direction."

One of the most successful was in a newly privatized company, where a manager was offered incentives for reducing the number of staff.

Miss Gosschalk added: "There has been a large increase in the number of companies using incentive schemes but very little evidence on whether they motivate people, change their behaviour or improve corporate performance."

Miss Gosschalk, who interviewed company chairmen and chief executives for the report *Management Incentive Schemes - How Effective Are They?* discovered that annual cash incentive schemes and share option schemes were not as effective as payments related to "real performance improvements".

Where to get your Boxing Day Times

Newsagents throughout Britain will be opening on Boxing Day, when *The Times* is the only quality newspaper that will be published. In some places where newsagents are not opening, wholesalers will be setting up temporary news stands. In addition to many independent newsagents, most outlets of the following retail chains will be open:

John Menzies, Martins, Lewis Meeson, Lavells, R S McColl (Scotland), Star News (Midlands), GT News (Sheffield area), Circle K/Sperrig, Portsmouth Newspapers, Strridge Dawson, Dillons.

W H Smith will not be open. To be sure of your *Times*, hand the order form to your newsagent today.

I would like to receive a copy of *The Times* on Boxing Day

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Dartford bridge threatened by call for 'safer' design

By Sheila Gunn, Political Staff

The Government's scheme for a privately-financed bridge across the Thames at Dartford is in danger of collapsing.

An all-party committee of MPs is calling for an inquiry into the Department of Transport's handling of the Dartford-Thurrock Crossing Bill, which would allow Trafalgar House to build the £83 million bridge.

The criticism is coupled with a call to redesign the bridge because of fears that vehicles could overturn in high winds.

The special select committee set up to examine the Bill will publish its report soon.

The bridge will provide the missing link in the M25, taking southbound traffic, while the two existing tunnels at Dartford will take north-bound vehicles. Dartford River Crossing Ltd, a subsidiary of Trafalgar House, plans to build and operate the bridge, recouping its investment from tolls and then passing the bridge to public ownership after 16 to 20 years.

All seven members of the Conservative-dominated committee voted for a resolu-

tion asking Mr Paul Channon, Secretary of State for Transport, to investigate the handling and presentation of the Bill by his Department.

However four MPs, three Labour and one Conservative, have gone further and demanded a public inquiry into the tendering process which awarded the contract to Trafalgar House.

One of them, Mr Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, said: "The four of us felt that by contrast to the planned second Severn bridge, it looked as if this major estuary crossing is being skimped and we are going to get a second-rate project".

He said: "There was evidence of massive corner-cutting where public safety has taken second place".

He described the way the Department presented the case for the Bill as "a shambles".

The committee also voted by five votes to one to amend the Bill so that wind shields would be fitted to make it safer for vehicles crossing in high winds. The only member to vote against was Mr James Couchman, Conservative MP

for Gillingham, Kent and parliamentary private secretary to Mr Antony Newton, the Minister for Health.

Dartford River Crossing yesterday said that the amendment would return the scheme to the drawing board because of doubts about the effect on the bridge of adding lattice sides to it. It could add another £13 to £19 million to the cost and delay construction by 18 to 21 months.

The company said: "When the crossing was designed two years ago we produced a mixture of designs. They were done according to the guidelines laid down by the Government and we followed them."

"If the select committee has ordered a radical change in these guidelines 12 months down the road, it is going to make private investors very wary of doing business with the Government."

The Department of Transport said it will now be up to Ministers and the company to consider their positions. It will be open to the Government to attempt to overturn the committee's amendment as it goes through Parliament.

Chinese interpreter honoured



Madame Zhang Yanyun, the cultural counsellor who interpreted for the Queen and for Mrs Margaret Thatcher during their visits to China, after receiving an honorary Master of Arts degree at Bath University yesterday. On her immediate left is Mr Ji Caizhu, the Chinese Ambassador, next to Mr Mingjiang Song, Madame Zhang's husband (Photograph: John Rogers).

Northern councils told to sell inner-city land

By Richard Ford

The Government has ordered two local authorities to sell underused land and has given a warning to another 10 councils that they may be forced to dispose of 13 sites as part of its campaign to regenerate urban areas.

Local authorities at Burnley, Lan-

cashire, and Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, have been told to sell two sites comprising three acres by Mr David Trippier, Under Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment.

He has also told other local authorities in the North that he may order them to dispose of 13 sites covering 72 acres as

part of the Government's plans to improve the inner cities.

"I am anxious to stop the spread of urban decay which is already affecting our inner cities. The owners of these sites should be in no doubt about our determination to see this land brought into early use."

Envoy in plea over girls 'sold as brides'

By Nicholas Beeston

The British ambassador in the North Yemeni capital of Sana'a appealed to the authorities there yesterday to intervene on behalf of two sisters from Birmingham who say they were sold as teenage brides by their father and are being held against their will in a remote tribal region.

Mr Mark Marshall, the envoy, met the head of the consular department of the North Yemeni Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explain the plight of Zana and Nadia Mahsen, aged 20 and 22, who said in an interview they had been tricked into leaving England and forced into arranged marriages.

It is believed Mr Marshall played a tape-recorded interview made with Zana Mahsen in which she claimed she had been forced to sleep with her husband and bear him children.

The sisters have dual British-Yemeni nationality and are considered Yemeni by Sana'a.

Mr Timothy Eggar, Under Secretary for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, said the Yemeni authorities had "shown sympathy" for the young women but said they were constrained by tribal traditions.

Casuals help to cause chaos with Christmas post

By Mark Ellis

The festive season will be marred for thousands of families this Christmas because of inefficiency and lack of training at the Post Office.

Letters, cards and parcels are routinely misdirected by the army of 30,000 casual, untrained sorters hastily recruited to move a mountain of about 1,500 million Christmas items.

"Fragile" notices on parcels are ignored. They get thrown and crushed with the same abandon as sturdier packages.

I joined this casual army at the huge central London sorting office at Mount Pleasant and have had news to report for a family called Tucker of Brize Norton, Oxfordshire. I fear that their child's Teddy bear has gone to Wales.

It had been carefully wrapped and posted in Germany and marked "Teddy bear" for the benefit of the Customs. It was among a pile of parcels which my group was sorting yesterday. It was thrown by a casual sorter towards the correct "Berks & Oxon" hopper, an accurate, 12 ft job, but the parcel bounced along the top of the already full bin and plopped into one marked "Wales".

There was no time to correct the mistake: everybody was busy trying to conquer a mountain of mail which sometimes means that there are as many as five million items waiting to be sorted.

Parcels wrapped and tied with ribbons and marked "Handle with care please" were hurled into the sorting hoppers, crushed beneath heavier items and put into sacks which were clambered over and dragged into vans.

During a week-long stint as Casual No 205 it became clear why the hope of next day delivery for first class post is regularly dashed.

I reported to Mount Pleasant's Christmas casuals desk at 6.45am a week last Friday. By 7.20 I was sorting piles of Christmas mail into hoppers which divide the United Kingdom into more than a dozen sections.

There had been no test of my aptitude, intelligence or geographical knowledge. My week at Mount Pleasant was notable for the number of times I heard shouts such as: ● Plymouth - that's Hampshire innit? ● Sidcup? Bung it into Staffordshire.

With a dozen or so other casuals I had been shepherded to the sorting tables and told to take a seat. We were expected to know what to do without any pep talk or guid-

ance on what to do with poorly addressed letters.

Within 35 minutes of stepping through the door we were expected to sort letters ("facing") in Post Office terminology.

Some of my colleagues had a thin grasp of British geography and as many writers did not put the county destination on the envelopes several main towns found themselves moved hundreds of miles.

The mistakes would be corrected later, but not always on the same day, when full-time postmen broke down the letters into smaller geographical areas, causing delays and missing trains.

On scores of occasions I saw casual sorters make wild guesses or just dump cards with unfamiliar addresses into any shire to hand.

At Mount Pleasant more than 200 casuals, mostly unemployed people and students, signed in daily for seven-hour shifts paying £3.09 an hour, double rates on Sundays, and had little or no

● Don't worry, it doesn't matter; that's someone else's problem ●

conversation as they worked with personal stereo sets blaring or swayed in rhythmic trances to the screeches from their ghetto blasters. There is little pride in the work.

A fellow casual was concerned she had put mail in the wrong sorting boxes. "Don't worry it doesn't matter. That's someone else's problem", a postman said.

By 9pm everything must go for the mail trains. Unsorted mail is "dumped" in the nearest bag regardless of its destination and goes through the system again.

The Post Office is not always to blame for breakages or lost gifts as some fragile presents are covered in wrappings little stronger than tissue paper and sealed with loose string. If mail escapes the pitfalls of the sorting office it could still fall foul of some of the so-called "Spanish customs" operated by postal staff.

One is known as "squiffing" by which lazy postmen put some letters back into a post box on their rounds. Another is known as "doubling", when the mail is taken home to deliver the next day.

Despite the difficulties in the sorting offices, the cavalier attitude to training, the monotonous production lines and the mistakes, about 87 per cent of first class mail is delivered on time.

Security firm labelled 'Scrooge of the Year'

Trade unionists yesterday delivered a Scrooge of the Year scroll to a security firm in Consett, Co Durham.

Safeguard Security Services was said by the Trades Union Congress Northern Regional Council to pay gate guards only £1.32½ per hour.

Union officials produced a married security guard's pay slip showing take-home pay of £71.27 for a 62-hour week.

But Mrs Diana Vivers, a partner in the firm, said the pay slip had been misread and the firm had a "civilized" pay structure agreed with the white-collar section of the

general and municipal workers' union.

She said the man whose pay had been quoted had left the firm in November.

Last night Mr Bob Howard, regional TUC secretary, said he would look further into the matter after receiving a report from the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), which nominated the firm for the award.

Correction

The Swansage Yacht Haven Bill involved a marina development covering half the mooring area not half of Swansage Bay, as reported in some editions of December 15 and 16.

CAFFE LAVAZZA
The No. 1 coffee in Italy
Sponsor of the Ski World Cup

Lavazza is undeniably Italy's leading coffee. Skiing is one of the world's great sports. As a sponsor of the Alpine Ski World Cup, Lavazza combines two great Italian pastimes. Such a combination deserves to be greeted with a toast, to the success of the Ski World Cup and to Lavazza, the true Italian Espresso coffee.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Alicante hits the lottery jackpot

Madrid — Newspaper vendors and their customers in the Mediterranean port of Alicante got a lion's share of nearly 17.8 billion pesetas (£88 million) yesterday in Spain's huge annual Christmas lottery (Harry Debelius writes).

The capricious "El Gordo" (The Fat One), as Spaniards call the top-prize number, showered his largesse on the lucky holders of 71 tickets bearing the number 20,064.

The Finance Minister, Señor Carlos Solchaga, reassured winners in a national radio broadcast, that their winnings from the State-run lottery are tax-free. The second prize benefited residents of the small north-central city of Soria to the tune of £42 million.

Lottery for NBS? page 8

Noumea TV man arrests

Noumea (Reuters) — French police yesterday arrested the deputy leader of New Caledonia's separatist Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front in an unprecedented crackdown on indigenous dissidents in France's Pacific territory.

Mr Yewene Yeiwene, who was charged with incitement to murder and violence, is being detained in prison pending trial, judicial sources on the island said. The Front's leader, Mr Jean-Marie Tjibaou, is facing similar charges for calling on the indigenous Kanaks to defend themselves against any violence by pro-French white settlers, the sources added.

Dhaka strike fails

Dhaka — An opposition call for a two-day general strike across Bangladesh went largely unheeded in Dhaka yesterday as the Government released a fresh batch of political prisoners in further relaxation of the month-old state of emergency (Ahmed Fazl writes).

Buses began to run, shops stayed open and civil servants ignored the strike call, according to the Government. But airlines cancelled flights and train and river services were affected. Six people were hurt when a bomb was hurled at a bus and 12 arrested in clashes with the police.

Somali shuffle

Mogadishu (Reuters) — President Barre of Somalia named new ministers of foreign affairs, finance and defence yesterday, moving his influential half-brother, Mr Abdurrahman Jama Barre, from Foreign Affairs to Finance and making the former Finance Minister, Mohamed Sheikh Osman, Minister without Portfolio.

The new foreign minister in the smaller Cabinet is Mr Mohammad Ali Hamoud, previously Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. The Defence portfolio was given to Major-General Aden Abdullahi Noor.

Social encyclical

Rome — The Pope yesterday announced a new encyclical on the social teaching of the Church (A Correspondent writes).

He told cardinals and prelates of the Rome Curia that it would underline "how much the Church wants to work together with the men of our time".

The encyclical, the Pope's seventh, is not expected to be published until the end of January.

Swiss to extradite P2 lodge chief

From Alan McGregor, Geneva

A chapter in Swiss legal history ended yesterday when a Geneva court cleared the way for the early extradition to Italy of Licio Gelli, the financier and former head of Rome's P2 Masonic Lodge.

He was found guilty of having bribed a warden to smuggle him out of the Switzerland's Champs Dollon prison in the early hours of August 10, 1983. He had been detained since his return from Latin America to give himself up here on September 21.

He was given a 16-month suspended sentence. Simultaneously the court revoked the suspension of a two-month sentence passed on him in March 1983, for entering Switzerland with false documents.

Officials said this meant "theoretically" that Gelli could be detained for a further one month and 27 days before being handed over to Italy.

Gelli is to be extradited on the basis of charges recognized by the Swiss authorities, which include fraud in connection with the 1982 collapse of the Banco Ambrosiano.

However, other accusations, including links with right-wing terrorists, are regarded here as "political". He can be tried in Italy only for crimes recognized by the Swiss.

Soviet law will curb glasnost 'excesses'

From A Correspondent Moscow

An eminent Soviet jurist yesterday revealed that a draft law regulating glasnost, or openness, had been prepared, in an apparent move to control perceived excesses of a campaign endorsed by the Soviet leadership in the last two and a half years.

It was also revealed that separate legislation was in preparation concerning the regulation of demonstrations and the activities of unofficial groups which have come into the open in the more relaxed climate of glasnost.

The announcement that the legislation was planned came in a round table debate of four jurists from the distinguished State and Law Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, published in the daily *Sovetskaya Kultura*. The Bill regulating glasnost would be "one of the essential guarantees" of openness, Mr Leon Shepilov said, explaining that the Soviet legislative framework needed an overhaul to take new social and political realities in the Soviet Union into account.

Mr Konstantin Sheremet said that the "new political experience" in the Soviet Union was only just beginning. To hope that existing legisla-

tion could predict the new developments was "an illusion", he said. Mr Sheremet explained that legislation on glasnost was needed because "everyone has his own notion of democracy".

Concerning the right to demonstrate, the experts noted that city councils such as Moscow and Leningrad had recently been forced to interpret the rights guaranteed in the Constitution by adopting "temporary regulations".

This was because in the past the constitutional right to demonstrate had "in practice" been used for official demonstrations organized by the ruling Communist Party, he said.

The city regulations were adopted after a series of demonstrations in central Moscow, notably by Crimean Tatars who held protests in Red Square. The regulations appeared mainly designed to restrict demonstrations by imposing conditions, such as the need for prior approval in writing.

Mr Sheremet said the legislation should "regulate in a more detailed way" conditions in which demonstrations could take place.

Concerning non-official groups, of which thousands have sprung up across the Soviet Union during glasnost, Mr Shepilov said that legislation had become necessary

because some groups had "come into conflict" with state bodies, and because of "excesses". He said it was "no secret" that some of the groups were anti-social.

The non-official groups range from punks and hippies, to the extreme conservative Pan-Russian Patriotic movement, Jewish initiative groups and political associations set up in support of the current restructuring drive.

One jurist, Mr Mikhail Piskotin, noted that it was only recently that the notion of "If it's not illegal, it's allowed", had been accepted in Soviet society. "It used to be the opposite way round," he said.

Mugabe and Nkomo seal unity with an embrace

From Jan Ranth, Harare

After years of conflict in Zimbabwe and thousands of casualties caused by their falling-out, Mr Robert Mugabe, the Prime Minister, and Mr Joshua Nkomo, the opposition leader, embraced yesterday on signing an agreement to unite their parties.

The pact reconciled the Zanu (PF) party of Mr Mugabe, aged 63, who is due to be installed as executive President in eight days, and Zapu, founded by the falstaffian Ndebele leader who, at the age of 70, is weary after a lifetime of political batterings.

A mass of cameramen and writers who jammed into the entrance hall of State House here witnessed the cheerful end to two years of on-off negotiations, and the often wild speculation that accompanied them.

Mr Mugabe said only that the existing Zanu (PF) structures "will have to be restructured" in order to take cognisance of the new situation, and that the Government and all its arms "will include persons coming from Zanu".

But sources close to both party central committees confidently affirm that both the new Central Committee and Politburo will be expanded by about a third to accommodate Zanu executives.

Mr Mugabe, who described himself as "filled with emotion", also made an appeal to guerrillas in Matabeleland who have waged a low-level but telling war against the Government for the last five years, to "lay down their arms, come and join the rest of the people and work constructively for the nation".

Mr Nkomo spoke at length to reassure whites and citizens of Indian origin, saying that the signing "means the unity of all the people of Zimbabwe".

Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo sat with President Canaan Banana, who is to give up his ceremonial post on New Year's Eve, and clinked glasses of local champagne.

The document also states that the party will "seek to establish a socialist society in Zimbabwe on the guidance of Marxist-Leninist principles, and that it will seek to establish a one-party state in Zimbabwe". It says the accord will be implemented by the national congresses of both parties convening "in the shortest possible time" and that the existing structures of their organizations be merged "in the letter and spirit" of the agreement.

Both parties are also committed to "vigorous steps to eliminate the insecurity and violence prevalent in the western provinces of Matabeleland".

Lacking from the document is the detail that can give political force to the agreement — the power given to Zanu executives, and the number of positions to be given to them on the new party's Central Committee and Politburo, and in the Cabinet.

Mr Nkomo remarked: "People will look at this document and start analysing as to whom has gained and who has not gained. Let me say to you, what is contained here is a true feeling of both these political parties. The document may appear to be incomplete, but what is important is the spirit behind it."

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An uneasy calm returns to strife-torn Gaza



The modern weaponry of Israeli soldiers on patrol in the Gaza Strip forming a stark contrast to the traditional scene of a local resident riding a donkey yesterday. An uneasy calm returned to the area after two weeks of violence in the Israeli-occupied territories claimed the lives of at least 21 Palestinians.

In Bethlehem it was difficult to tell Christmas was coming yesterday morning by walking through the streets (Ian Murray writes).

The "Merry Christmas" illuminations straddle the road leading from Jerusalem. In Manger Square the usual Christmas tree has gone up and been decorated.

But nearly all the shops were shuttered and the few that were open had their heavy metal blinds drawn and their doors ready to be shut quickly in case of trouble.

On the outskirts of the town men of the Golan Brigade, in their dark brown berets, were manning a spiked roadblock. As each taxi or car with distinctive blue West Bank license plates drew up, the troops ordered out all the passengers for a thorough check of their papers.

Inside the town, men of the brigade patrolled the quiet, shuttered streets. A group of pilgrims in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity looked up to see the soldiers in their tent on the roof above the Christmas tree and others on the Catholic church of St Catherine. There are always troops on the rooftops of Bethlehem at Christmas these days, but with the lack of crowds they stand out much more obviously.

As the day wore on more and more shops pulled up their shutters to reveal the glittering tinsel decorations and windows full of shining mother-of-pearl ornaments and olive-wood statuettes. The tourist bus park filled slowly

during the afternoon but the number of tourists and pilgrims seemed below average for the time of year. Hopes are high among shopkeepers that the Ministry of Tourism is right in saying there have been only a handful of cancellations so far and that bookings remain well above last year's Christmas holiday season level. Even so they find that the number of hours they can open their shops is limited and trade is far from brisk.

With the university closed and the town's refugee camp at Deheish under very intensive patrol, Mr Elias Freij, the Mayor, hopes that the festive season will pass off quietly, with Bethlehem showing that it can be the capital of peace on earth. He has decided to go ahead with the traditional processions and allow the regular midnight mass at St Catherine's.

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Tentacles of Iran arms scandal reach for Mitterrand's close associates

From Philip Jacobson, Paris

Slowly but surely the simmering scandal involving illicit arms shipments from France to Iran is closing in on trusted associates of President Mitterrand. Known as *L'Affaire Luchaire*, after the company which sold some 500,000 artillery shells to Tehran during the Socialist Government under Mitterrand's Presidency, this has become a potentially damaging issue ahead of next spring's presidential election.

To the undisguised delight of the governing conservatives, an investigating magistrate has just laid some serious charges against a senior associate of the Minister of Defence at the time, M Charles Hernu, who was known as one of the Mitterrand inner circle.

Coming only days after the filing of formal accusations against the head of Luchaire

were announced, this suggests that the *affaire* will not fade away before the vote.

There is no longer any serious dispute about the central facts of the case: it is generally accepted that the illegal sales to Iran did take place in the mid-1980s. But the issue has now become how much did, or should, M Mitterrand have known about the policies of M Hernu.

The formal incrimination of M Jean-François Dubois, right-hand man of M Hernu in government, has given rise to speculation about the position of the former Minister.

M Hernu has denied any wrongdoing, but in conservative circles the rumours persist that there is more to come in this long-running *affaire*.

Yet such are the ambiguities of foreign policy in Paris today, in the wake of the

controversial agreement under which two French hostages were recently released in Beirut, that relations with the Ayatollah remain an extraordinarily sensitive issue.

As if to underline that, *Le Monde* reported yesterday that it is possible France continued to sell weapons to Iran after the Chirac Government came to power in March 1986. Yet the biggest aircraft manufacturer, Dassault, desperate for orders, is awaiting permission to deliver up to 20 Mirage warplanes to Iraq.

On the purely political front, there is inevitably speculation now that M Hernu himself may eventually become another casualty of *L'Affaire Luchaire*. As the conservative daily *Le Figaro* happily points out, M Dubois reported directly to him on all the most sensitive business of the Ministry.

There are some who feel that M Hernu may not wish to shoulder whatever blame is going his way. He was, after all, singled out to carry the can for the attack on the Greenpeace ship *Rainbow Warrior*, and since his resignation from national politics he has been confronted with a murky financial scandal in his stronghold in Lyons.

In a carefully worded denial of the *Le Monde* story, the Ministry of Defence said last night that no French weapons had been sent to Iran since the Chirac Government came to power. But although the denial appears to rule out the direct transfer of weaponry to Tehran, it did not address itself directly to the newspaper's suggestion that arms officially destined for Portugal may have been re-exported to Iran. According to the Ministry, however, no authorization had been given

Nicaraguan peace talks meet impasse

Santa Domingo (Reuters) — A second round of Nicaraguan peace talks was called off yesterday after US-backed Contra rebels refused to meet two foreigners appointed to negotiate a ceasefire on behalf of the Sandinista Government.

The talks, which stem from a peace accord signed by five Central American presidents in Guatemala last August 7, made a shaky start on Monday amid rebel vows to step up attacks and Sandinista complaints that only direct talks with Washington would stop the war.

The rebels attacked three towns on Sunday and announced a big new push in their battle to oust the Sandinistas, suggesting that they aimed to give military teeth to demands for political reforms.

Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan Defence Ministry reported that a DC6 civilian cargo plane belonging to the Nicaraguan airline Aerolineas had been hit by a US-supplied "Redeye" missile fired by the Contras. The rebels, however, denied firing on the plane, which came down in Costa Rica.

"We have reached an impasse," the Roman Catholic



Costa Rican officials inspecting the wreckage of the downed Nicaraguan cargo plane.

Church mediator, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, told reporters after seven hours of indirect talks late on Monday night failed to produce agreement on how to arrange face-to-face talks.

He said the rebels had refused to meet a West German politician, Herr Hans-Juergen Wischniewski, and an American lawyer, Mr Paul Reichler, without the presence of at least one official of the

ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front. The Government, meanwhile, rejected participation of any official in direct negotiations.

Cardinal Obando said he hoped each side would reconsider. No further meetings were scheduled, he added.

The chief rebel delegate, Señor Jaime Morales Carazo, attacked the Government's refusal to participate in direct

negotiations as another show of intransigence.

The government delegation could not be reached for comment.

A first round of talks here on December 3 and 4 also collapsed when each side tried to attach conditions to ceasefire proposals. Since then, a two-day truce over Christmas has been agreed.

Referring to the Contra attacks on three mining towns

in north-eastern Nicaragua on Sunday, President Ortega told the Nicaraguan Congress on Monday that government troops had driven the rebels from Rosita and Sima but were still fighting in Bonanza.

The Nicaraguan Defence Ministry said on Monday that 23 government soldiers and 24 Contra rebels were killed in the fighting. At least 53 civilians were wounded in Sima.

President Ortega said that the attacks were an indication that the Contras were still using Honduran territory as a base for their operations, in violation of the five-nation regional peace accord.

● SAN JOSE: Costa Rican aviation authorities worked yesterday to find out which side of the border with Nicaragua the rocket was fired which downed the civilian Nicaraguan plane (Martha Honey writes).

Preliminary examination of the wreckage, lying in the junction of the San Juan and San Carlos rivers, confirmed that one of its four engines had been hit by a surface-to-air rocket.

The pilot, Señor Manrique Hilgado, said his plane was hit soon after crossing into Costa Rican air space.

Malta politicians urge Italy to release former minister

From A Correspondent, Rome

Two Maltese ministers have spoken out in Italy against the detention there of the Labour MP and former Minister of Justice, Mr Joseph Brincat, who is accused of involvement in an underworld organization that laundered money from kidnapping and other illegal activities.

He has been in prison since December 5, but was formally charged only on Saturday. Under Italian law years can elapse between arrest and trial.

Mr Guido de Marco, Malta's current Minister of Justice and Deputy Prime Minister, yesterday ended a three-day visit to Italy after meeting Italy's Minister of Justice, Signor Giuliano Vassalli.

"I think it was a useful meeting to put into focus certain international judicial aspects," he said before flying back to Valletta.

He added: "Brincat has been held in jail without any form of accusation being made until last Saturday, which is astonishing to us since in Malta 48 hours after

an arrest the person is either charged or released."

Of suggested Maltese connections with "Mafia-type organizations" Mr De Marco said: "I do not believe that one can talk seriously of these things. But we will investigate this aspect of the question."

Another member of the Maltese Cabinet passing through Rome airport, the Foreign Minister, Mr Vincent Tarone, said on Monday: "The Maltese Government does not want to interfere in the administration of Italian justice. However our Government maintains that it would be fair to grant provisional liberty (bail) to Dr Brincat."

On Saturday Mr Brincat was formally charged with receiving stolen property; taking property under confiscation; and substitution of money from theft or kidnapping for the purpose of extortion.

On November 19 Mr Colin Shiras, a Maltese jeweller driving from Palermo to Naples, was critically injured in a crash and is still too ill to be questioned. The car was

placed under police custody in a garage.

On December 5 Mr Shiras's wife, Mary, accompanied by Mr Brincat, appeared at the garage and asked for access to the car. The garage attendant explained that it was under police custody, became suspicious and called the police when they insisted.

It was alleged by the police that they found Mr Brincat and Mrs Shiras taking packets of gold, silver, jewellery and banknotes out of a hidden compartment under the car's fuel tank. The total value has been estimated at about 140 million lire (£60,000).

They were arrested and police then claimed that one of the banknotes was marked as part of a ransom paid in a recent kidnapping in Sicily.

● VALLETTA: The former Prime Minister of Malta, Mr Dom Mintoff, under whom Mr Brincat served as Minister of Justice, said yesterday Mr Brincat was a man of integrity. His return to Italy if released would be guaranteed by Government and Opposition MPs.

Rescuers scour sea for ferry victims

From Humphrey Hawksley
Manila

Helicopter crews in the Philippines yesterday retrieved the first bodies from Sunday's ferry disaster in which as many as 2,000 people may have died.

Some victims were discovered by fishermen in small boats in the choppy straits 100 miles south of Manila. Others were washed ashore onto beaches on the east coast of the island of Mindoro, near where the ferry Dona Paz and a small tanker collided in darkness.

Members of the Marine Board of Inquiry met throughout yesterday at the start of what is likely to be a lengthy and difficult investigation into the accident, one of the worst shipping disasters in maritime history.

The Transport Secretary, Mr. Renato Reyes, said he estimated that some 2,000 people would have been on board — at least 500 more than the vessel was licensed to carry. The only surviving crew members were two men from the tanker.

A commemorative Mass is due to be held in Manila today. President Aquino described the disaster as "a national tragedy of harrowing proportions".

Late yesterday, the number of survivors picked up rose by one to 27, after a boy aged four or five was found floating on a piece of wood in the search area. A fisherman took him on board his boat, and the boy is said to have recounted how his father put him on the timber shortly after the ferry sank.

Many of the victims are thought to have gone down



Grief-stricken relatives of missing passengers from the ferry Dona Paz spending a second day yesterday at Manila's north harbour, waiting for news of the rescue operation. Nearly 2,000 people are now feared dead in the disaster.

with the ferry, caught up in the explosion and the fire which followed the collision. Others probably died while trying to escape through the burning oil slick. Many died because they could find little or no debris to cling to in the dark and choppy waters.

Yesterday's search was hampered by bad weather, but it soon became clear that hopes of finding a substantial number of people alive were fading.

Reports from Mindoro island where the bodies had been discovered were particu-

larly unpleasant. Villagers in the remote settlement of Herera built a funeral pyre for the victims, most of them women and children, their clothes torn off and their bodies badly burnt from the explosion or the burning oil.

One member of the Mari-

time Board of Inquiry said he hoped the authorities would now take shipping safety more seriously. "The trouble with us is that every time there is an accident, we raise bows, but nothing changes."

Some of the survivors spoke of up to 3,000 people on board

the ferry. One claimed that there were some 1,000 children who, under shipping regulations, do not need a ticket and would not be registered on any passenger list. Many of the inter-island ferries operating between the Philippines islands leave port overloaded, with the heavy demand for travel neutralizing the will to enforce shipping regulations.

The victims were mainly poor peasant farmers and their families who were travelling to Manila looking for work or to spend Christmas with relatives. Under new government regulations, the relatives automatically receive 20,000 pesos (about £650) for each victim in insurance compensation. However, with no confirmed passenger list and the impossibility of identifying the victims, it will be some time before payments can be made.

But one badly burnt youth, Renato Asistorga, aged 19, a farm labourer from the impoverished island of Samar, said he would be happy to accept the compensation. For him it would represent more than a year's salary.

● JAKART: Searchers have failed to find anyone from a freighter that sank off the coast of central Kalimantan on Sunday, an Indonesian rescue team spokesman said yesterday (AP reports).

Accounts differ as to the number of people aboard the 490-ton K.M. Binter. "We only knew that the freighter left Surabaya with 15 crewmen and around 300 tons of timber," the spokesman said. The official Antara news agency said 55 people were on board.

30 die as rebels fire rockets on Afghan forts

From Michael Hamlyn, Delhi

Western diplomats have reported a worsening of security south of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, as the eighth anniversary of the Russian invasion approaches this weekend.

Attacks by the Mujahidin guerrillas fighting the Russian occupation culminated last Friday in a rocket attack which was said to have caused more than 30 deaths. It was concentrated on the Afghan military encampment in the historic Bala Hissar fort, and a military residential area in Qala-e-Nau, diplomats said. Rockets were also directed at an Afghan army post on Bini Hissar hill, at Qala-e-Char and Wala-e-Zaman.

Diplomats reported that in the Qala-e-Nau attack 20 buildings, including an Afghan general's house, had been destroyed, and 20 people killed. Eleven soldiers were reported killed in the Bala Hissar attack.

The bombardment, which lasted 20 minutes, provoked a response by artillery. More rockets were heard by diplomats the next day, but there were no further reports of damage or casualties.

The diplomats say that the attacks, and escalating fighting south of the city in Charasiah, Rishkor and Koh-e-Safed, indicate a growing threat

to the Logar valley road, which they say is vital to Soviet efforts to lift the siege of the southern city of Khost.

Ironically, fighting in the area — which was clearly audible in Kabul itself — followed a declaration by the Afghan Government that it was a zone of peace.

The diplomats pointed out that the dramatic Russian announcement in Moscow of a campaign to lift the siege of Khost has not been repeated in the Kabul media.

"The battle for Khost could turn out to be a far more conventional struggle than has been the case in the past," a diplomat added. Denial of air superiority — because the Mujahidin possess surface-to-air missiles — and worsening weather in the region, plus the Mujahidin's significant terrain advantages — they control the heights overlooking the Gardez to Khost road, and Khost itself — may present serious problems for the larger Soviet and Afghan forces.

"Moreover, Mujahidin morale and improved tactical co-ordination inevitably will have an important impact on the fighting," a diplomat said.

He thought it likely that the Mujahidin will maintain the siege of Khost despite the high casualties.

Traffic on move after border row

Nairobi (Reuters) — Vehicles began moving across the Kenya-Uganda border yesterday, eight days after it was closed by an outbreak of shooting between the two countries' security forces in which at least 15 people were killed.

Lorries from Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Zaïre began crossing the border at Malaba heading for the Kenyan port of Mombasa.

Deadly doctor

Warsaw (Reuters) — A Polish doctor was banned from practice for 10 years, fined 100,000 zloties (£175), and given a three-year suspended jail term for operating while drunk which cost the life of a 12-year-old girl.

Liner trials

Saint Nazaire (Reuters) — The world's newest cruise liner, the French-built Sovereign of the Seas, has set out across the Atlantic on a shakedown voyage before its maiden cruise in the Caribbean.

Radio riot

Athens — Two Salonica city councillors were in hospital yesterday after clashes between opposition conservatives and riot police when bulldozers demolished an illegal radio mast.

Whaling suit

Tokyo — Greenpeace is to take legal action to try to force the United States to apply sanctions against Japan if it fails to honour an international moratorium on whaling.

Chinese nude

Peking (AP) — For the first time a painting which includes a nude has won a prize at a Chinese art show, the official newspaper *The China Daily* reported.

New York's social powder keg

Race protest defused after jury convicts whites of killing black

From Charles Bremner, New York

The threat of big race demonstrations subsided in New York yesterday after a jury convicted three white youths, including one Briton, for the manslaughter of a black man. The case has generated strong emotions and symbolized what black leaders see as renewed racism in America.

Mayor Edward Koch and several black leaders said they were satisfied by the manslaughter convictions against the teenagers who one year ago attacked a group of black men in the white working class suburb of Howard Beach, near Kennedy Airport.

Among other politicians expressing relief that a potential powder keg had been defused, Mr Mario Cuomo, the state Governor, said, "The rule of law operated here apparently without fear or favour — that is all we can ask."

Much had depended on the jury's decision, reached after 12 days of deliberation marked by prayer vigils by black community leaders out-

side the court in the borough of Queens.

As tension rose before the verdict on Monday night, hundreds of black demonstrators staged the biggest disruption of Manhattan traffic seen for years. Scores of protesters, including several clergymen, were detained by police overnight, while smaller groups continued to demonstrate their anger that two of the convicted youths had been acquitted of the more serious charge of murder.

Jon Lester, aged 18 and the son of a Manchester policeman who moved to New York with his mother seven years ago, Scott Kern, aged 18, and Jason Ladone, aged 17, face up to 15 years in prison for chasing Michael Griffith on to a busy road where he was killed by a passing car one year ago on Sunday.

Lester, whose mother remarried, is still a British citizen, is already serving a jail sentence for possessing a gun. One white youth was acquitted and eight more face a second trial on lesser charges.

stemming from what the city authorities treated as a lynch mob-type of attack, seen as one of the most serious racial incidents here for years.

The youths' families and their supporters in Howard Beach say the incident was a simple gang fight that was magnified by politicians and news media to epic proportions. Angry residents chased television crews and reporters from the scene of the incident — a Howard Beach pizza parlour — after the verdict on Monday night.

Black leaders treated the affair as a symbol of a new racism. They also cite the acquittal this year of Mr Bernhard Goetz, the white man who shot three black youths on a subway train in a mugging case, and numerous instances of alleged brutality by the mainly white New York police against blacks.

Mr Alton Maddox, the lawyer for the family of the victim in Howard Beach, said yesterday: "Tensions are worse now than they were a year ago. There's a lot of anger."

Mr David Dinkins, the president of the borough of Manhattan and the highest-ranking black in the city administration, voiced the disappointment of some blacks. "I would have been even happier if we had gotten murder," he said yesterday.

Mr Koch, who is Jewish and has often been accused of racism, weighed in with remarks that are likely to spark more controversy on Monday night. "I find it hard to accept that in almost every case when a black is attacked, it's racist and when a white is a victim it's robbery," he said.

One of many ingredients that breed tension in New York is the belief among the public, largely justified by statistics, that a disproportionate number of the robbery and murder cases in the city are committed by black or Hispanic youths.

The owners of several expensive boutiques in Manhattan this week used the argument to defend themselves against official accusations that they were discriminating by refusing to open their electrically-locked doors to young black men.

Mr Jimmy Breslin, the journalist-writer who chronicles New York life for the *Daily News* called the Howard Beach conviction "a meaningful conviction as we have had in this city."

The case is far from over, given that the defence lawyers have filed appeals based on reports on Monday that the jury forewoman had been seeking to sell her story to the tabloid newspapers well before the verdict.

Peking residents get sweet and sour taste of rationing

From Robert Grieses, Peking

Mrs Zhang Nan, a Peking factory worker in her 40s, does her nightly food shopping at an open-air market on Jiangmenwai Avenue, near the Jiangnan Hotel. This month she was startled to learn that pork and sugar had begun to be rationed in the Chinese capital.

"I thought the economic reforms were supposed to prevent this sort of thing," she complained.

So did a lot of other Pekingese. In fact, news of food rationing has been the talk of the capital since it was learnt here that pork was being rationed in Tianjin and Shanghai.

Since the rules changed, every resident of Peking will be entitled to 2.2lb of pork each month. Every family with up to three members will be limited to 2.2lb of sugar a month. Larger families will be allowed to receive 3.3lb.

Pork is the most popular meat available in China. Indeed, the Chinese word for "meat" means "pork" unless otherwise specified. Consumption of beef is almost unheard of in this city of 10 million people, while chicken is usually available at up to three times the price of pork.

A pork shortage has developed in China's big east-coast cities because the price of pig-feed went up while the price of pork remained stable. A 220-lb hog costs a Chinese farmer some 170 yuan (about £27.50) to raise. On selling it, the farmer can hope to make a profit of between 20 and 30 yuan.

Around Peking, farmers expect the ratio of cost to selling price for pork to be about 1 to 5. When it fell to 1 to 4 earlier this month, pig farmers could not afford to raise more pigs. It is this sort of simple

economic logic that Peking planners have not yet begun to grasp fully, even in the era of Mr Deng Xiaoping's reforms.

The Peking city government has attributed the sugar shortage to China's stagnating production of sugar, a decrease in sugar imports and a sharp rise in demand.

The reluctance of China's leadership to let market prices reflect production costs has led to production bottlenecks and now, rationing. As a

Peking (Reuters) — The Chinese were told yesterday by the *Economic Daily* that if grain consumption continued to increase at the present level of 15 million tonnes a year, demand would reach 600 million tonnes by the year 2000, when output is expected to reach only 500 million. The newspaper urged people to stop wasting grain, consume more eggs, chicken, mutton, rabbit and fish, and less pork and beer.

result, more rationing — of cotton, eggs, and perhaps building materials — is now expected. Some Western bankers in Peking believe that during the next 18 months to two years China will experience more shortages of consumer goods as the Government attempts to curb domestic consumption and tighten the spending of foreign currency. One banker noted: "The Chinese are now facing economic problems that they cannot control."

Before 1980, Chinese consumers were largely protected from price increases by state subsidies paid directly to producers. In recent years, however, many such subsidies have been done away with in an effort to let market forces control supply and demand.

State money was used by some officials for putting up luxurious houses, for buying luxury cars or for giving banquets, the official was quoted as saying.

but protests by students and factory workers have forced the Government to restore some price supports. As a result, price subsidies for a wide range of consumer goods resemble a vast patchwork quilt rather than a proper policy.

Pork has never been subsidised fully in China. Instead its price has been allowed to rise or fall within a band set by the state. The amount of pork sold in free markets and important state markets has now been limited by Peking city officials in an effort to balance falling production with demand.

Other commodities continue to remain in short supply, regardless of subsidies. Coal briquettes, used to heat traditional one-storey dwellings in Peking, have been in fairly short supply this winter. One stove, heating a room of 40sqft, can burn up to 300 briquettes a month, Mrs Zhang said.

Meanwhile, a government official said this week that in order to curb runaway consumption, the free spending of state funds by enterprises and government offices must be limited.

State money was used by some officials for putting up luxurious houses, for buying luxury cars or for giving banquets, the official was quoted as saying.

Shockwaves reverberate despite bid to forget 'dirty tricks' campaign

Barschel scandal highlights democracy fears

From Richard Owen, Bonn

It is over two months since Herr Uwe Barschel, the former Prime Minister in Schleswig-Holstein and a leading Christian Democrat, was found dead in his hotel bathroom in Geneva. The official inquiry in Kiel, the capital of Schleswig-Holstein, has just finished hearing evidence and will issue its findings next month.

Medical reports have already indicated that Herr Barschel, accused of running a "dirty tricks" campaign in this year's Schleswig-Holstein election, died of a drug overdose. The ruling Christian Democrats in Bonn hoped the affair could be settled quickly, and even held a one-day party conference in Bonn to clear the air and try to put the scandal behind them. But shockwaves are still reverberating.

However secure West German democracy may appear 40 years after the Third Reich, West Germans worry that it is being undermined. "We Germans become rather neurotic at the first sign of a threat to social discipline and public behaviour," one academic said, referring to memories of the Weimar Republic and the breakdown leading to Nazism.

There is no comparison with modern times. But the Barschel scandal has co-

incided with other disturbing trends, including agonizing — particularly within the liberal Free Democrats (FDP), coalition partners of the Christian Democrats (CDU) — over whether to ban demonstrators from wearing masks, and a

Memories of the Weimar Republic and the breakdown into Nazism make Germans neurotic at the first sign of a threat to social discipline

potentially fatal split within the Green Party, once seen as the party of youth and hope.

The shock of the Barschel affair was partly the result of the high standard of public behaviour West Germans expect — a standard set by an exceptional post-war political generation which established democracy on the ashes of Hitler's regime. President von Weizsacker embodies this integrity today. But almost everyone else seems to have come out badly from the Barschel affair.

The "dirty tricks" campaign against Herr Barschel's

personable Social Democrat (SPD) opponent, Herr Bjorn Engholm, used smears involving alleged tax evasion and sexual misconduct. Possibly under pressure from Bonn to hold Schleswig-Holstein at all costs after decades of Christian Democrat rule, Herr Barschel — according to the Kiel hearing — involved his secretary and closest aides in apparent perjury.

There were also suggestions at Kiel that the SPD may have known what was going on and turned it to advantage against the Christian Democrats. Powerful national figures have been dragged in: Herr Gerhard Stoltenberg, the Finance Minister and Herr Barschel's predecessor as Schleswig-Holstein's Prime Minister, appeared in Kiel to apologize to Herr Engholm and testify that despite his close involvement he had not known what the CDU was up to. Herr Stoltenberg's standing in public opinion has fallen sharply.

"If you had predicted the Barschel affair a year ago I would have said you were mad," one official remarked with a mixture of sorrow and amazement. Even if the Kiel report dismisses lurid tales of arms dealing and conspiracy to murder, West Germans are

disturbed to think that the political process could have sunk to such depths.

Not the least disturbing aspect is the revelation, which has filled columns of print in the German press, that Herr Barschel was on powerful tranquilizers which disoriented him long before his body was found in the bath on October 11.

While Germans were still reeling from the scandal, they were dealt another blow in November by the murder of two policemen during a demonstration by alleged ecology activists, protesting against an extra runway at Frankfurt Airport.

West German democracy survived the attempts a decade ago by Baader-Meinhof terrorists to destabilize it. But a new menace has arisen in the form of the *Autonomen*, protesters who — as at Frankfurt — dress in black and wear masks and crash helmets. One of their leaders, Andreas Eichler, is accused of the police murders.

For the Interior Minister in the CDU-FDP coalition, Herr Friedrich Zimmermann, the answer is simple: ban mask-wearing in demonstrations. This, however, triggered an agonized debate among the liberals, afraid that to tackle

threats to democracy in this way might be considered "authoritarian". This month they agreed at a special conference to support new laws punishing mask-wearing with instant arrest. They also agreed, despite their doubts, to

Democracy has survived the attempt by Baader-Meinhof terrorists to destabilize it. But a new menace has arisen in the form of the Autonomen

a system of immunity for terrorist "super grasses", or informers.

The strain of the mask debate has been even greater on the Greens. The party was already heading for a split between the Realists, or "Realos", and the fundamentalists, or "Fundis", who dislike the compromises the Greens have made with the establishment since entering Parliament four years ago.

The INF deal removing Euro-missiles has taken the steam out of the peace element in the Greens, while the crisis

over the Frankfurt murders has exposed those Greens who are ambivalent about the use of violence. A special conference of Green MPs and the party executive this month only just averted a collapse.

If the Greens do split, the beneficiaries will be the Social Democrats, hoping for gains in local elections in spring — especially in Schleswig-Holstein, where the Barschel factor has damaged the local CDU. The man least likely to gain is Chancellor Kohl who at the special CDU congress in November to heal the wounds of the Barschel scandal was given a vote of confidence, but with only 88 per cent of the votes, compared with over 90 per cent in leadership elections two years ago.

Herr Kohl, supporters say, will gain international standing from Germany's six months presidency of the EEC from January 1. But his domestic standing is in peril. Herr Peter Glotz, a leading Social Democrat, recently pointed out in *Der Spiegel*, that the SPD, like the left in Europe as a whole, will continue to fail to convince voters that it is more fit to govern than conservatives and has an alternative vision of the future.

Ottawa MPs still split on jet crash

From John Best, Ottawa

The Canadian Government has hinted that the police may be close to exposing the worst case of terrorism in the country's history. But the Opposition has dismissed the assurance and renewed its demands for a royal commission of inquiry into the destruction of Air India flight 182 on June 23, 1985.

The jumbo jet plunged into the Atlantic off Ireland, apparently after a bomb exploded, while flying from Montreal to London en route to Bombay. All 329 people on board died.

Canada's biggest criminal investigation has failed to establish who was responsible. Charges were laid against members of British Columbia's Sikh community in connection with the bombing, but these were later thrown out for lack of evidence.

Recently the case was aired once more in the House of Commons after a report that the Security Intelligence Service had erased a number of phone tapping recordings that could have helped in the investigation.

Under intense questioning Mr James Kelleher, the Solicitor-General, refused to confirm that the erasures had occurred, on the ground that to do so might compromise the investigation.

Mr Kelleher said that "an

extremely active investigation" was still under way, and added: "We are trying to do everything we can to catch those responsible." He also said: "I hope that we will be able to announce some results in the very near future."

Opposition critics were not impressed by the clear suggestion that the case was on its way to being solved.

They accused both the security service and the Government of bungling the investigation and maintained that only a full-scale judicial inquiry could clear the air.

Although Mr Kelleher refused to confirm that tapes of conversations recorded by the security service had been erased, the chairman of the Security Intelligence Review Committee, Mr Ronald Atkey, acknowledged that erasures had taken place.

The extent of the damage done to the Air India investigation remains unclear. According to some reports, the material on the tapes remains available to investigators in transcript form and in notebooks.

Mr Atkey, a former Conservative Cabinet minister, has said that his review committee may launch its own investigation of the erasures — but only after the jet disaster has been solved.

A seasonal tale of six cities

From a Soviet 'Santa Claus' to a turkey dinner in India, scarcely a country is untouched by Christmas, whatever its beliefs. *Times* correspondents report from across the world

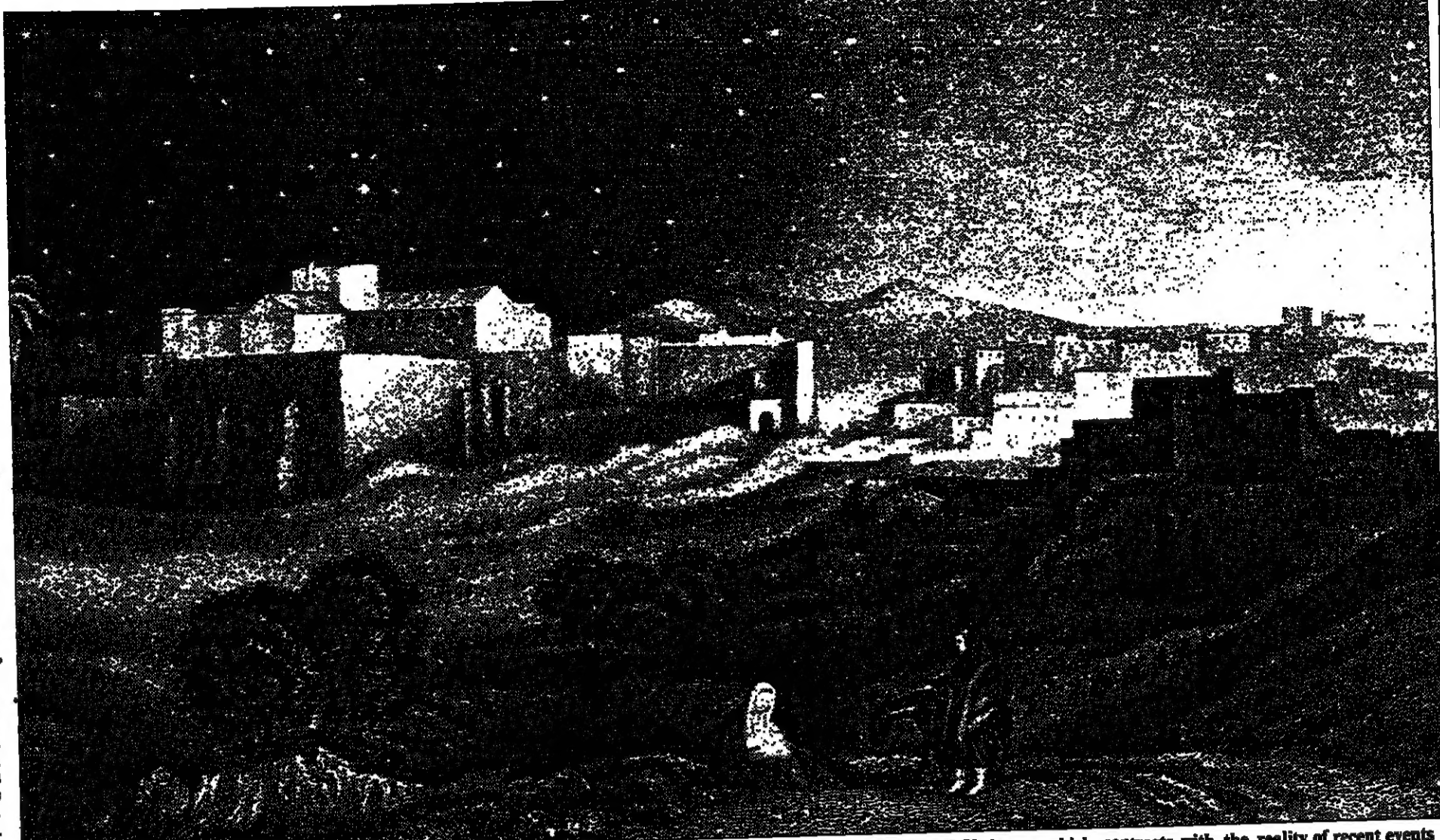
BETHLEHEM

Despite the present troubles, Bethlehem is determined to have its Christmas — and if not Bethlehem, where else? On the road to the city, the "Happy Christmas" sign in lights goes up earlier and stays up longer than anywhere else — possibly in the world — as befits the place where it all started. For perhaps a mile beyond the sign, as the road winds up between the olive trees planted in the golden boulder-strewn fields, there is a feeling of what it may have looked like nearly 2,000 years.

But at the edge of Bethlehem that feeling ends. The Family Market, a tinsel-decked like festive supermarket the world over, is packed with imported cheer to enable expatriates to enjoy the kind of traditional Christmas, with plastic snow and Hong Kong bangles.

On Christmas Eve the formal festivities begin as the Catholic Patriarch is escorted into town in his big American car by a squad of Israeli police on horseback. They are drab in their dark blue uniforms, but they honour a tradition from the days of British rule, by carrying lances.

Come the evening, the town is locked securely away behind roadblocks, with thousands of pilgrims obliged to take a shuttle bus in from Talpout if they want to join in the night-long carol singing in Manger Square outside the Church of the Holy Nativity. Security is intrusively oppressive, even in "normal" times. Soldiers are silhouetted on the rooftops



How still we see thee lie: an engraving of Bethlehem, after a sketch by Lamartine, encapsulates a traditional view of Christmas which contrasts with the reality of recent events

around the Square. Some strange-looking "nuns" have been reported talking into walkie-talkies. Body searches are routine, alcohol is banned.

Troops move into Deheisheh Camp on the town's outskirts a week or more before the holiday. Deheisheh is one of the more militant camps, and in the past year it has been caged by a 20 ft high fence to stop children throwing stones at passing Israeli cars. Its residents are wanted well out of sight at Christmas time.

The Church of the Nativity is itself a battleground between the different Christian communities. The Catholics, who celebrate the feast on December 25, only have processional rights through the ancient basilica. Israeli police line the way to the grotto of the manger beneath the

church to make sure there are no transgressions into Greek or Syrian territory.

The grotto is hung with smoke-blackened paintings. Oil lamps swing dangerously as, on Christmas Eve, the very important invited guests crowd in to hear the service at the spot where even the most sceptical believe the infant Christ was first laid in a manger. Behind the paintings it is still a cave, one of many that once sheltered the animals behind the rude homes on the hillside.

If all agree on this site, there is a real dispute as to where the fields were in which the shepherds watched their flocks. The Greek Orthodox, the Roman Catholics and the YMCA all have their pretensions to the title and all host services.

The Anglicans have their

own special service, inside a courtyard of the Church of the Nativity late on Christmas Eve, held by courtesy of the Greek Orthodox, who do not celebrate their Christmas until January 6. Unaccompanied and by torchlight, the small Anglican community sing their carols as the sounds of electronically amplified choirs from round the world waft over the ancient walls from the bright stage in Manger Square.

Christmas in Bethlehem is a mixture of the commercial, the oppressive and the divisive. And yet, as you hear once again the familiar words "Let us go in our hearts and minds even unto Bethlehem" it is impossible not to feel a lump in the throat and a slightly smug feeling inside. "I am really here."

Ian Murray

Ahmad al-Hajj Ali, the proud owner of west Beirut's Teddyland toy outlet, can no longer make a killing. Gone are the days when he imported cheap replicas of M-16 rifles and noisy little revolvers for Lebanon's children of war.

This Christmas, he says, boys who got Rambo-inspired toy rocket launchers last year are dying to own a toy computer, or space-age games. The season's best sellers are educational toys. "No one wants weapons and that's a good sign," he says.

Despite the economic crisis, people line up at a corner post in Hamra Street to purchase newly cut pine trees at a price double that of the average minimum salary of only \$40. In a war-torn country, with soaring prices, unprecedented inflation and growing

BEIRUT

unemployment, such contradictions are rife. "Christmas is to forget all the terrible things we have been living this last year," says a client of a street vendor selling smiling dolls with pink cheeks, selling at below \$3.60. "There is little money, it is true, but there's certainly no time to ponder on our tragedy."

Lebanon's Santa Claus are already here — plane-loads of elegant Lebanese expatriates, their wallets full of hard currency earned in West Africa or the Gulf, land daily to meet impoverished relatives and the uncertainties of Beirut. "We are a united family, no matter what — we want to be together to celebrate life," said a wealthy Christian Lebanese businessman who es-

caped the civil war and opened a store in Cairo.

"Let this Christmas bring us some more hope," said Nazir, a talkative barber whose optimism is often the target of jokes among the unemployed drivers and tailors who gather at his shop in the Manara district. "Just a little more hope, that's all. The war never ends, there's no solution to the political crisis, the Lebanese pound keeps falling."

"But even in the worst times, when there's no water, when you have to spend hours waiting to buy bread, we say to ourselves: 'This is our country; look, tomorrow there will be telephone, the pharmacy will open, and we shall begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel.' Unfortunately, that's when they cut the electricity..."

Juan Carlos Gumucio

WASHINGTON

Americans are divided about Christmas: some prefer Thanksgiving, some do not. There is something transcendently and homely about Thanksgiving, something sincere and real, qualities that Christmas lacks.

Christmas officially begins the day after Thanksgiving, at the end of November. The soft, peaceful Thanksgiving weekend gives way to a savagely aggressive commercial blitz on radio, television and in the Press. Christmas lights are suddenly a-buzz in the stores. Santa hits the shopping malls and the cash registers chime.

Once Christmas is in full spate it is outwardly indistinguishable from Christmas in Britain. We share the same carols, the same nursery rhymes, the same Christmas trees and twinkling lights in the front parlour, even the same fairy on top. British-style Christmas crackers and imported Christmas puddings are beginning to make an appearance in some stores.

Schools are low-key for fear of violating the constitutional separation of church and state. There are no Nativity plays. There is no singing of carols nor telling of Bible stories. Figures of the Christ-child are absent. But classrooms are often gaily decorated, depending on the religious mix of the children.

My favourite Christmas event in Washington is on Christmas Eve, when the Kennedy Centre throws open its doors for a free concert of carols and entertainment by hosts of well-known performers, all of which is broadcast live on a local radio station. The happy melée goes on for much of the day, with thousands of people constantly drifting in and out and singing along. Choirs, musicians and entertainers of every hue blend into a magnificently rowdy but classy show. Because it is free, the corporate raider rubs shoulders with the vagrant.

Christmas means a turkey dinner, usually late in the afternoon. There is mercifully no President's Speech but television is a feast of Christmas fare. And suddenly it is December 26, when many Americans brutally throw out the tree, tear down the decorations, go to work or head for the post-Christmas sales.

Christopher Thomas

DELHI

There was a time when Father Christmas came on elephant back, and the welkin rang with cymbals and drums. Drunken British soldiers, lured around Connaught Circus in Delhi, or across Chowringhee Road in Calcutta, bawling carols. The rulers of the Indian Empire held fancy-dress balls, and Christmas dinner was made from tinned turkey, or roast fresh peacock.

Today Christmas is not quite a foreign holiday. But it is just one of 21 fixed or optional religious festivals which India takes, and is marked with a good deal less enthusiasm than the Hindu festival of lights, Diwali, or the Muslim Ids.

At Diwali the day and night are made dreadful with fire crackers and rockets, and every house is decked with lights. In Goa and Kerala, where there are large Christian communities, something of the same thing happens at Christmas, and large glittering illuminated stars hang in doors and windows. The hotels are full of Westerners who turn out, topless, on the beaches, watched by goggle-eyed locals. But in Delhi there is scarcely a hesitation in the

city's daily business. Most shops stay open.

It is mainly a holiday for expatriates, and in the mild winter sunshine where the temperature scarcely rises above 75°, it is pleasant to have lunchtime drinks on the lawn before a Christmas blow-out of domestic turkey: nice enough, but very very dry... and tough enough to have walked all the way to market.

A few shops in those markets, mainly in south Delhi, which cater for the diplomatic and expatriate business communities are a-rumple with tinsel and baubles. The Christmas trees themselves are a disappointment, being mostly rather dense fir bushes or rather sparse mountain pines.

The Steakhouse in leafy Jorbagh stocks locally-made Christmas puddings, and brings in a few hundred gobbling turkeys (and geese too) from Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh. They sell for 125 rupees a kilo (around £2.50 a pound), when dressed for the table.

A dark-skinned Father Christmas now solemnly clangs his bell outside Modern Bazaar, but it is a long time since the expatriates could afford to put him on an elephant.

Michael Hamlyn

MOSCOW

Although the atheist Communist state does not officially celebrate Christmas (which even before the 1917 Bolshevik revolution was a far less significant festival than Easter for the Russian Orthodox Church), members of Moscow's Western community feel surprisingly at home because of the way that Soviet New Year celebrations have acquired many of the seasonal trappings with which they are familiar.

In addition to the lights to be found on the estimated one million fir trees (or *yolka*) in Moscow, including the Kremlin itself, the toy shops will be jammed with last-minute buyers and the jovial figure of *Ded Moroz* (Grandfather Frost), the Iron Curtain's equivalent of Santa Claus, will be on hand to add his own inimitable touch to the festivities.

Clad in red with a flowing white beard and long black boots, he could easily be mistaken for his capitalist counterpart except for the constant presence at his side of *Snegurochka* (the Snow Maiden), usually a dazzling blonde in a white dress and far-trimmed hat.

Apart from adding some glamour to the occasion much

appreciated by Soviet fathers, she is also on hand to try and prevent the hundreds of red Santas from overdoing the liquid hospitality on their rounds — a particularly necessary function during this, the third winter under Mikhail Gorbachev's draconian anti-alcohol campaign.

As well as putting on an appearance at *Dersky Mir* (Children's World), the giant emporium situated inconspicuously just across from the headquarters of the KGB, some 500 red Santas are available as part of a visiting Santa service costing five roubles (£5) a time. For this sum, the seasonal pair (who have to pass a special exam) arrive in a yellow taxi, tell jokes and hand out a sack with presents handed over to them discreetly by the grateful parents.

According to the schedule set down by the Soviet organization which runs the service, starting at 9am sharp on December 25, the Rent-a-Santas are scheduled to carry out about 30 visits a day. But the habit of accepting vodka from each household has often put the latter part of the schedule heavily at risk. Each Santa earns about 300 roubles (£300) for the stint, so competition is fierce.

Christopher Walker

Peter's Basilica. Both on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, he delivers homilies and the theme, according to his advisers, will touch on spiritual rebirth. Outside the huge Basilica, workmen have erected a crib, with life-size, though slightly implausible, figures of the Holy Family. Joseph, in particular, looks like a sociology professor.

At noon on Christmas Day, the Pope addresses the world in his *Urbi et Orbi* message which is broadcast in most Catholic countries. This is the time for the Pope's political messages, especially as it is broadcast in some 40 languages, including those of the different Soviet republics.

This year he is expected to comment on the US-Soviet summit, as well as other symptoms of the East-West thaw. The summit was closely monitored by Vatican diplomats, who are planning for a meeting between Gorbachev and the Pope in late January, when the Soviet leader is expected to visit Rome.

Roger Boyes

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CONCISE CROSSWORD NO 1446

ACROSS

- Henry VIII's birthplace (6)
- Study intensively (4)
- Spiral (7)
- Happening (5)
- Oozes (5)
- Arched cellar (5)
- Sponge (5)
- Uncontaminated (5)
- Strikes posture (5)
- Thick (5)
- Ethoxyethane (5)
- Final part (4,3)
- Curse (4)
- Instructive meeting (8)

DOWN

- Conditioned reflexes (6)
- Very small particle (8)
- Groove (3)
- Stour carpet town (5)
- Non-curd liquid (4)
- Gossip (6)
- Ocean picture (8)
- Norm (8)
- Author of Sybil (8)
- Leading Roman (5)
- Orator (6)
- Old Sailor (3,3)
- Voucher (4)
- Freeze (3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1445

ACROSS: 1 Always 5 Strip 8 Elk 9 Canton 10 Impugn 11 Shop 12 Tresses 14 Pictorial cross 17 Duty-free 19 Muse 21 Biting 23 Accouten 24 Bar 25 Gently 26 Driver

DOWN: 2 Leash 3 Antipathy 4 Senator 5 Skive 6 Rip 7 Pegasus 13 Paramount 15 Erudite 16 Leonard 18 Rugby 20 Sieve 22 Wit 23 13 Paramount 15 Erudite 16 Leonard 18 Rugby 20 Sieve 22 Wit

SOLUTION TO MONDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Ack-ack 5 Cove 8 Plunk 9 Neutral 11 Esophageal 13 Mien 15 Balahester 17 Nod 19 Cambodia 22 Rub down 23 Adam 24 Tyre 25 Ankara

DOWN: 2 Champ 3 Ask 4 Kenneth Kaunda 5 Crux 6 Varnish 7 Spee 10 Link 12 Like 14 Kerb 15 Beilby 16 Kaur 17 Cany 20 Demur 21 Bode 23 Ask

VATICAN

It is strictly Christmas Day at the work place for Pope John Paul. But within the crowded schedule of masses and homilies, the pontiff will find time, during his tenth Christmas on the throne of St Peter, for the taste of his native Poland.

According to tradition, John Paul — the former Archbishop of Krakow — will sit down at table on Virginia, Christmas Eve, when the first star appears in the sky. He will break a holy wafer, the *opiate*, with his closest advisers, including his secretary, Monsignor Stanislaw Dziwisz. The Polish sisters in the Vatican kitchens then dish up red beetroot soup, cold and hot fish, *pierogi* (dumplings stuffed with cabbage) but no meat. The Pope, despite his big frame, eats sparingly. After quiet prayer, he will celebrate a candlelit midnight mass.

On Christmas morning the Pope will be up, as usual, at six. At 9.30 he will celebrate the Christmas Day mass in St

THE TIMES DIARY

Marriage lines

There is talk of a spring wedding in the literary world — not between publishers for a change, but two agents, A.D. Peters and Fraser & Dunlop. Most of the covert courting has come from the former, under the guidance of his chubby chairman, Michael Sissons, with F&D at first apparently playing hard to get. But the question is where to live. Both outfits have smart residences, in Buckingham Street and Regent Street respectively, but have been spotted house-hunting further west. They also have large families — including Mortimer, Sampson and Drabble at Peters and Stoppard, Frayn and Osborne at the other. But rumours that Sissons favours a new home near the M4 to ease his passage to Hampshire may be discounted. I expect the couple to settle at Chelsea Harbour and keep a pied-à-terre in the West End.

Stop press

It may be timely to remember that the Michael Cole affair is not the first time the Queen's Christmas message has been made public before the big day. In 1973 there was embarrassment at the BBC when the Christmas edition of *The Listener* hit newsstands three days before its publication date, December 27. As it was the 21st anniversary of the message to the Commonwealth, the magazine printed the text in full. No heads rolled on that occasion — it fell during an interregnum when the journal was under an acting editor.

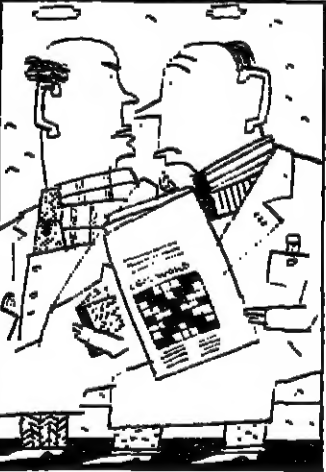
Driven to it

Poor Shirley Williams, who was blamed for compounding her reputation for unpunctuality by arriving late for her wedding on Saturday, was not guilty. Architect friend Chris Honey, who drove her to the church, said: "It was my fault. I arrived 20 minutes late to pick her up. She was waiting, coiffed and dressed with her hat on the table." Honey's excuse is that he was caught up in traffic — in darkest Hertfordshire?

Failing health

What with rows over the funding of the NHS and a convalescent Secretary of State, the Department of Health and Social Security doesn't know whether it is coming or going. In a letter listing its new telephone numbers for this month's return to Whitehall's Richmond Terrace, the Elephant and Castle team writes: "From the day after Boxing Day. Tuesday January 29."

BARRY FANTONI



'Six down's Spycatcher'

Screen test

As Conservative whips predict another vote next month against cameras in the Commons, ITN is manoeuvring behind the scenes to rally support. One tactic is to replace *The Lords Programme* (which will include sound from the Commons) from January 12 — two weeks before the expected vote — thus showing up the contrast between the televised peers and the heard-but-not-seen MPs. The vote, likely to be the last word on the issue in this Parliament, will also be a measure of how winniness is the new Conservative intake. A strong "no" vote will indicate few are willing to incur the displeasure of Mrs Thatcher, whose attitude has hardened against televising since the last vote in 1985, when she led the "noes" for a majority of 12. That night was memorable for the extraordinary scenes of Tories rushing between lobbies to join their leader when she made an uncanny "u-turn".

● Tacky. A video of Bernhard Goetz's confession to shooting four teenagers on the subway has gone on sale in the US. The \$39.95 tape, made by New York detectives, was shown in court. The only mercy is that Goetz, who has been acquitted of attempted murder and assault but sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "carrying a concealed weapon (although he is free pending appeal), doesn't get any money from it.

PHS

Save the NHS with a lottery

by Mary MacKenzie

Last year the New York state lotteries provided \$336.7 million for the education service. In the present outcry over health service spending in Britain, conditions are surely favourable for the introduction of a national lottery to provide additional public funds, possibly as much as £1 billion a year.

A British lottery is not the answer to the NHS problems. That lies in management, better training for nurses and more sensitive handling of their lives and needs, but it could provide much-needed extra funds that cannot come from taxation.

It could provide cash to pay for some of the new demands: heart by-pass operations and transplants; Aids research and care; kidney dialysis machines, scanners for every hospital; the training of special skill nurses; private beds for semi-urgent cases; and the additional care needed for the elderly in an ageing population.

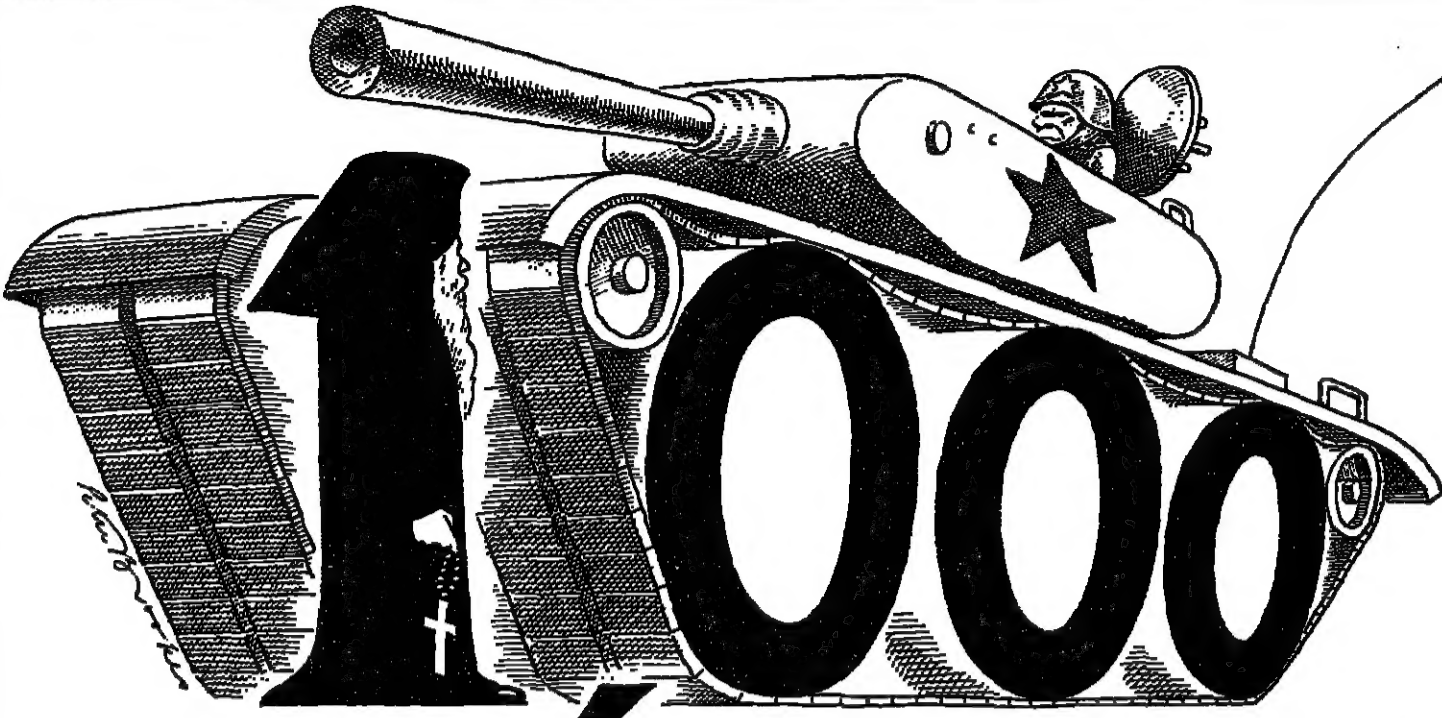
Let the general public help the health service and enjoy themselves at the same time. It is a simple investment. Buy a ticket from your local shop and check the numbers on television or in the press. Simple, and with bigger prizes than the football pools.

The American lottery winners shared millions of dollars in prize money. In New York a bricklayer won \$30 million. As one shopkeeper said when asked why he sold so many tickets: "They want to change their lives. If they hit one of those big jackpots once, they can retire." It is such a success in New York that shops selling tickets have been sold for up to 70 times the going rate. Vendors receive 6 per cent, from tickets, state education 45 per cent. Administration uses about 16 per cent.

The government here will say that the

income from a lottery would be offset by diminished sales of premium bonds. Most unlikely: a premium bond can be kept for ever, a sort of permanent raffle ticket. The football and racetrack promoters will worry, but they need not. The lottery would raise new money, not take it from the old forms of gambling. The working population has money to spend, to save, even to gamble and could well afford through a national lottery to contribute more money to the NHS.

The previous experiments of lotteries as run by local authorities were unsuccessful largely because the prizes were small. As New York among other places has shown, large prizes arouse great public interest. Nigel Lawson should seize the initiative and send a team to New York to investigate the possibility of introducing a national lottery to Britain. What has the government to lose?



Moscow's date with God

Bohdan Nahaylo on the great Christian anniversary about to be celebrated in the Soviet Union which in its potent mixture of religious and nationalist forces sets a considerable challenge for Gorbachov

This Christmas will have a special significance for the millions of Christians in the Soviet Union. By the time they celebrate the birth of Christ on January 7, in accordance with the old Julian calendar, it will be 1988 — the year that marks the millennium of the Christianization of the medieval state of Kievan Rus from which the Ukrainians, Belorussians and Russians trace their historical and religious heritage.

For the USSR's Christians this jubilee is a source of joy and inspiration, but for the rulers of the world's first militantly atheistic state it poses a considerable challenge. The anniversary weaves together religion, nationalism, human rights and relations with the Vatican in such a way that it tests the Kremlin's avowed commitment to *glasnost* and democratization, and brings into focus the continuity in Moscow's policies towards the USSR's two large Slavic, non-Russian nations.

The fact is that after 70 years of Soviet rule, religion is still very much alive in the USSR. The imposition of regulations closely restricting religious activity, relentless anti-religious propaganda, and several major assaults on the various churches have failed to eradicate belief in God. Instead, they have produced a resilient strain of faith tempered by persecution and martyrdom.

In these more hopeful days of *glasnost* and *perestroika* it is all too easy to forget that, apart from the officially recognized religious communities in the Soviet Union whose leaders have agreed to act within the narrow limits prescribed by the state, there are entire "cathomb" churches whose members, along with numerous other religious dissenters — Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant (not to mention Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist) — daily risk, if not arrest, then various forms of extra-judicial pressure, vilification and abuse. Even today, when some of the more prominent religious dissenters have been freed as part of Gorbachov's "democratization" campaign, several hundred religious believers are still known to be imprisoned.

The latest Soviet, and therefore conservative, estimates acknowledge that up to 20 per cent of the population, or close to 60 million, are believers, and that religion is increasingly attracting younger people. What also worries the authorities is that some Com-

munist Party members, particularly in the traditionally Muslim republics, observe religious traditions and take part in rituals. Until now the Soviet authorities and their allies from among the leaders of the legally tolerated denominations have claimed that there is full freedom of conscience and that no one is persecuted for his religious convictions; only those who break the law get into trouble. In fact, this is one of the main messages that the Kremlin hopes to get across with the help of the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church — the Moscow Patriarchate — during the millennium celebrations in Moscow.

An unforeseen result of *glasnost*, however, has been that both religious dissenters and even respected members of the Soviet intelligentsia like Dmitry Likhachev are openly challenging this line and calling for a loosening of restrictions. They point out that religious legislation is unacceptable to so many because it still aims at the gradual elimination of religion, not coexistence with it.

The Kremlin is at least creating the impression that it intends to moderate its policy on religion, although the signals are still contradictory. Just over a year ago Gorbachov himself delivered a speech in Tashkent (which, significantly, has still not been published in full) calling for "a decisive and uncompromising struggle against manifestations of religion".

A main reason for the softer line seems to be that the Gorbachov leadership wants all elements of society involved in making *perestroika* — a success. Therefore religious believers, a potentially hard-working and conscientious constituency, are being placated with the promise of a more lenient attitude. Until now, as a senior figure of the Russian Orthodox Church, Metropolitan Alexei of Leningrad and Novgorod, complained in September to a Soviet newspaper, there has been a tendency to treat believers as second-class citizens.

Unable to ignore something as important as the millennium of the baptism of Kievan Rus, the Kremlin has decided to make the most of the occasion for its own political ends. This will be greatly facilitated by the co-operation of a docile Russian Orthodox leadership that was brought into line long ago by brute force and subsequently bought off with privileges. These churchmen have already indicated that they will be using the anniversary to promote the Kremlin's peace initiatives and to assure visiting religious dignitaries that there is full religious freedom under Gorbachov's benevolent rule.

The Moscow Patriarchate is depicting next year's celebration as a purely Russian event, even though Kiev, the centre of the ancient Rus polity where the baptism took place, is today the capital of Ukraine. With the Ukrainian Catholic and autocephalous Ukrainian and Belorussian Orthodox churches long banned in the Soviet Union, the Russian Orthodox Church is claiming to be the sole heir to the millennium.

Challenging this, the underground Ukrainian Catholic Church, Ukrainian dissidents, and the large Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the West, emphasize that the state of Muscovy did not arise until the 13th century and the name Russia was not adopted by its leaders until the time of Peter the Great. They claim Moscow has usurped the historical and cultural patrimony of the Ukraine and Belorussia and that the Soviet state and the Russian Orthodox Church are promoting their Russification and the erasure of their national memories.

But the biggest headache for Moscow is the recent resurgence of the catabomb Ukrainian Catholic or Uniate Church, and the support that Pope John Paul II is giving it. This four-million strong church was "liquidated" in 1946 through the destruction of its hierarchy and forcible amalgamation with the Russian Orthodox Church. It

has managed to survive in the underground and on the eve of the millennium its leaders have put Moscow on the spot by taking advantage of *glasnost* to press for legislation.

The Kremlin is averse to restoring an institution that identifies with Ukrainian nationalism, while the Moscow Patriarchate knows only too well that at least a quarter of its existing churches and its strongest eparchy are situated in the traditionally Catholic region of western Ukraine, therefore any concessions to the Ukrainian "Uniates" threatens to undermine its position.

The Vatican has a further stake in the millennium, because the baptism of Kievan Rus took place before the great split of 1054, which divided the Christian world into the Latin or Roman camp and the Orthodox or Byzantine sphere. John Paul II has made it clear that he would like to visit the Soviet Union for the millennium celebrations, but that he is not prepared simply to endorse the Moscow Patriarchate's interpretation of the anniversary.

Pope John Paul put further pressure on the Kremlin and the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church when in October he engineered an historic reconciliation in Rome between the leaders of the Polish and Ukrainian Catholic churches. Significantly, the Polish primate, Cardinal Joseph Glępa, has emphasized the "few years" open to Ukrainian Catholics in their homeland and invited their leader in exile, Cardinal Myroslav Lyubachivsky, to participate in the Polish celebrations of the millennium of Kievan Rus next summer in Czestochowa.

Now, the Moscow Patriarchate faces the prospect of being upstaged by a display of Polish-Ukrainian Catholic solidarity that will inevitably draw attention to the plight of Ukrainian Catholics not that far away on the Soviet side of the border.

One thing is certain. If Gorbachov wants to further his image as a more tolerant ruler and a reformer, the millennium offers him a splendid opportunity to mitigate Soviet policy towards a significant portion of the Soviet population. However, it will have to involve more than just allowing the Moscow Patriarchate to stage lavish celebrations that by their very nature deny religious freedom to many of the USSR's Christians.

Paul Valley

Digby Anderson

Greetings from the taxman

The stereotype cast of Christmas presents consists of three groups. First are assorted selfish people, the products of our materialistic culture who, egged on by unscrupulous credit dealers and misleading advertising, spend, eat and drink far too much and have lost the true meaning of Christmas. Then there are the few, who are faithful to the true meaning and spend the week with their minds on higher things, being rude about the first group and helping the third group, who are those in need — especially at Christmas.

But there is another, forgotten, group which does not fit into the stereotype pattern at all. It is true this week is indeed a special week for its members, but not a week of celebration. They are not spending much, or rather they are, but not in the shops and not voluntarily. Their minds are transfixed, but on one particularly low thing, and they are extremely irritable. For them, it's the worst week of the year, and while not starving they are relatively miserable. They are the self-employed.

They — I should be honest — we, self-employed pay our taxes in two instalments a year, one at the end of June, the other, in order to reach the tax collector by the end of December, we post about today. After three weeks of scurrying around the accounts, somehow we've managed to find enough, and today we are suddenly several, not many, but several, thousands of pounds poorer in this of all seasons. And cold weather is promised.

This is not an appeal for faggots. Most of the self-employed whom I have met are happy to be so. There are advantages as well as drawbacks. We are increasing in numbers, some 2.7 million against 1.9 million in 1979. A massive third of the workforce is now not "full-time" employed, but self-employed, employed by more than one employer or works part-time. The trend is to much more varied earning patterns in which it will make increasing sense to tax individuals as individuals rather than as employees. If it were easier for individuals to become self-employed the signs are that a good few would do so. Further, several companies would like to pay individuals who are currently employees on a fee basis. Self-employment also makes a mockery of the old-fashioned working/unemployed dichotomy and offers considerable scope to those restricted by it, such as women with children and the elderly. Both those paid and those who pay them have an interest in freeing up the rigid employment market. Yet officially we are still a minority and an oddity. "End of the month" is a well-known problem time. Who knows about our problems in Christmas week?

One of the principle arguments against self-employment — complexity in tax administration — is now removed by Inland Revenue computerization. The real reason why the establishment tends to oppose self-employment and its extension is to do with the Christmas phenomenon. Simply, having to pay your taxes yourself, out of your own pocket and in

large lumps makes you irritable. Because you pay in arrears, you get to considering the money as yours. You have it long enough to work out all the good things you could do with it, not just whims but considered projects: helping the middle child through a difficult patch by buying a spell of private education, putting it back into your work, learning about and buying good wine, giving it to someone in need, that is someone you have actually met, and seen to be in need, and what's more, a need you know your help will alleviate. Then you think of what the politicians will do with it and become suspicious and resentful.

PAYE works the other way. It takes the money in reasonably easy instalments. It is not the taxman or politician who acquires the odium of taking it but the employer. It is muddled up with employee's mind with staff club subscriptions, pensions and whatever. He even thinks of his income in net terms. He has never seen it anyway so feels its going remarkably little. If one were to imagine an ideal climate in which irresponsible politicians could flourish, it would be an electoral system which allowed choice only over two packages of policies — no choice within the package — and a tax system which did nothing to bring home to people the extent and nature of the taxation. PAYE fits the evil picture painted, currently, of credit cards, except that to get a credit card you have to sign that you are aware of the conditions. PAYE conceals the conditions and terms of contract.

Quite simply, if one wants a system in which politicians are called to account and in which public interest in the wisdom and stupidities of public spending is encouraged, nothing could be better than extending self-employment. It would be the biggest single counterweight to the proliferating lobbies bargaining for expenditure on their special interests. And it would be the same logic as the poll tax, to make taxpayers aware of and concerned about how their money is spent. For that reason alone, this government could encourage it. But self-employment also encourages virtues this government preaches: responsibility and hard work.

Imagine the concerted wrath in this week if 25 million people and their families had been asked to draw out of their banks and building societies hundreds and thousands of pounds and put them with that ominous counterfoil in that envelope to which no postage need be affixed — if posted in the UK. Posting before Christmas would take on a totally new connotation. Imagine, too, the effect on the young the first time they had to send off their newly earned wages. That would be the most enduring legacy Thatcherism could leave, the reform to make possible so many other reforms, a permanent, vast and tax-educated interest determined to hang on to as much of its own money as it can, and equally determined that the little the politicians get should be spent as efficiently as possible.

The author is Director of the Social Affairs Unit.

however... Pearson Phillips

Sales pitch sans pareil

There are three little words that keep getting me into trouble. I can't say I wasn't warned about French women. Madame Bovary. Madame Legault. That Lady of the Camellias. There is no shortage of examples of grown men being led to their doom by the fatal attraction of French womanhood. But what is a poor, helpless, impressionable Englishman to do? I've got three dangerous liaisons going on at the moment. When they breathe those three poignant little words I'm in their power. "Et avec ça..."

They lose something in the translation, I agree. There seems little menace in a simple, innocent "and with that..." But some people will know what I am getting at. And for anyone who has not recently attempted to enter a French shop bent on buying one piece of cheese, one lump of pâté or a loaf I had better explain.

Our partners at the other end of the Channel tunnel have hit upon a technique of salesmanship so diabolically effective that it ought to be banned under the rules of international trade.

In Britain everyone knows that the task of shop assistants is to get the customer off the premises as quickly as possible. Then they can get on with more important matters. Their aim often seems to be to stop people recklessly spending money. There isn't normally much communication, although if pressed they will bring all transactions to a halt by saying "Anything else?" in a tone which plainly expects the answer no.

How different in France. There is a certain kind of alluring delicatessen lady, soft, well-rounded and mature, like one of her Camemberts. One enters with the modest desire to purchase a piece of Brie. But then comes that tender, endearing "Et avec ça..." It is not so much a question, more an assumption between responsible adults who have been around a bit and know that life is for living. There is also some unspoken appeal there, almost a cry for help. At a moment like that, how can one find the words of

rejection and simply turn away with one miserable piece of Brie, leaving the latent richness of the relationship unexplored?

For all I know, it works with missiles as well. There probably wouldn't have been an Iranian arms scandal involving the French body politic if some form of a civil servant hadn't said "Et avec ça..." to a passing emissary from Tehran who only called in for some spare parts for his Deux Chevaux.

It's costing me money. It's not just the Jeanne Moreau of the cheese shop. There is a finely aged Brie figure who lures me into reckless pâté-buying. "Et avec ça..." Even the man in the butcher's tries it on. "Et avec ça..." Why don't I run for cover into some supermarket? Don't think I haven't tried. But there's no escape even there. The lady on the cash desk of the corner store has a way of looking pitifully at my meagre purchases, no doubt estimating what kind of arid, soulless, futile life is being led by a man who confines himself to a pack of eggs, a natural yoghurt, and one brand of sliced sausage. Once it was all too much for her. "One lacks bread," she said, peering into my shopping basket, blushed and reached obediently for a loaf. "Et avec ça..." Well perhaps some butter.

Besides, the trouble with these fatal attractions is that one cannot simply break away. I know that it is a commercial relationship, but what isn't? At least there is a certain faithfulness there. I shall never experience the cold blast of rejection. The words of seduction will keep coming.

Anyway, with my Madame of the Camemberts I am in good, safe hands. She has control of the situation. She won't allow me to ruin myself. She wants things to go on. I have noticed of late that she has a technique for keeping me within the bounds of sanity. After three or four goes of "Et avec ça..." she reins me in with a "C'est tout?" "Is giving me the chance of escape with a safe 'yes'."

Or perhaps she's getting bored? Oh God!



1 Pennington Street, London, E1 9XN Telephone: 01-481-4100

ISLAM IN GAZA

The continuing unrest on the West Bank and in Gaza, contains a challenge to the Arab world as well as Israel. At present, that challenge looks as if it is directed at Jerusalem. But in the end, it might prove a greater threat to such capitals as Cairo and Riyadh.

The death of four Palestinians two weeks ago, run over by an army truck in Gaza, was the ostensible cause of the trouble. This touched off the most serious riots in 20 years. The reaction of Israeli troops fanned the flames of protest until they reached Arab towns within Israel and spread through other parts of the Middle East.

This is by no means the first time that trouble has erupted in the occupied territories. Terrorism in the 1970s was dealt with no less severely — and beaten. The disturbances have only been going on for a matter of days. They may be beaten again. But why, this time, has the big stick not worked yet? If the world has to become accustomed to years of Gaza unrest, in much the same way as it has become accustomed to years of South African unrest, what will have caused this change?

One reason is the political vacuum in which the peace process now lies. With Israeli and American elections due next year, the chance of early progress on the Palestinian issue, looks forlorn. The scant attention given to it by last month's Arab summit in Amman, is no less significant. Neglected (as it seemed to them) by their leaders, the restive young men in the refugee camps have taken matters into their own hands.

But more significant than yesterday's routine call to arms from Damascus, was the demand from Ayatollah Montazeri in Tehran for anti-Israeli demonstrations on Christmas Day. Although that in itself should not cause much loss of sleep to the coalition government in Jerusalem, the old Iranian slogan "Today Iran, tomorrow Palestine", repeated by Montazeri yesterday, is a reminder of the growth of Islamic fundamentalism in the occupied territories.

Relations between Iran and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) deteriorated after the Arab summit, at which Mr Yasser Arafat, leader of the PLO, called for united Arab support for Iraq in the Gulf War. But they

have recently improved and there have been signs that the Tehran government is reaching out to Islamic influences within the PLO and in the occupied territories.

The growing strength of Islam here is reflected by the rising number of mosques, which has almost doubled on the West Bank in 20 years, and in Gaza has gone up from 200 to 600. The increase in the Palestinian population is partly, but not wholly, the reason. Islam is rapidly replacing nationalism as the unifying force which Palestinian activists believe could help to propel them towards victory.

The present Government has consistently rejected the use of royal commissions. Generally, they have been right to do so. The present condition of the NHS, however, is an exception. The Government has no clear mandate for radical changes in the structure of funding and resource allocation in our health services, but they are clearly needed.

We continue, absurdly, a system which tightly constrains the resources available for health care but combines this with a service free at the point of delivery. Those in commerce know well enough that price and market mechanisms, or effective substitutes for them, are indispensable if supply and demand for health-care services are to be brought more nearly into balance.

This is simple to say but tortuous to achieve. Recent parliamentary exchanges illustrate how embittered and divisive could be the debate if the Government were to proceed without first attempting to build a consensus.

A royal commission, suitably composed and with a remit to propose radical changes in funding health-care provision, whether public or private, would be best equipped, by standing and precedent, to provide the basis upon which major reforms can be embarked upon.

Such a solution was first advocated by the British chambers of commerce in 1984. It is a pity that was not acted upon then; it should be now.

Yours faithfully,
RON TAYLOR,
Director-General,
The Association of British Chambers of Commerce,
Sovereign House,
212a Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2,
December 17.

Looking at future of health care

From the Director-General of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce

Sir, In 1988, the NHS reaches its 40th anniversary. While in part an occasion for reflecting on past achievements, attention will inevitably focus on the inadequacies of the inherited structure of the NHS in meeting the changing demands upon it. Those who think the right response to these problems is solely to provide more money should be aware that this would be no more than a palliative. We must, instead, now look for a cure.

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Yours faithfully,
RON TAYLOR,
Director-General,
The Association of British Chambers of Commerce,
Sovereign House,
212a Shaftesbury Avenue, WC2,
December 17.

(December 15) is both emotive and contentious.

In the professional lifetimes of Mr Harris and myself the pattern of orthopaedic surgery has changed out of all recognition. We do not see the results of poliomyelitis, nor bone and joint tuberculosis in our indigenous population. The major problems in medical terms are those of degenerative and other forms of arthritis. The solution to that distressing variety, namely rheumatoid arthritis, will not come from operative treatment, no matter how well intentioned and executed.

We, as orthopaedic surgeons, should be giving our enthusiastic support to moneys spent on finding the cause and, hopefully, the eventual medical treatment. There can be no question but that joint replacement has proved of enormous benefit to many disabled people, but it also behooves us to learn more about the natural history of these disorders and not to insist on carrying out radical destructive surgery which is not without complications. Mr Harris's figure of 250 hip replacement operations per year is quite staggering.

We seem to have been living in a surgical age of "how": perhaps we should move forward into an age of "why".

Yours faithfully,
W. M. McQUILLAN,
11 Melville Place, Edinburgh.

From the President of the Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association

Sir, Your thoughtful leading article today is far more constructive than the criticisms levelled at consultants by "sources close to Government" in the past few days.

No one doubts that more uniform standards of medical practice are required, but those of us who have to apply them are acutely aware that "obstruction", as the minister says, comes more often from inequality of resource than from consultant inertia.

You, Sir, and the minister, ask why productivity varies so much from one surgeon to another. We ask why facilities offered to one consultant vary so much from that offered to another. It is interesting to note that in a survey of 196 district general managers carried out by my association on November 6, most blamed their present predicament not on consultants, but on under-funding.

Yours faithfully,
E. C. V. PRICE, President,
Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association,
The Old Court House,
London Road, Ascot, Berkshire,
December 15.

Research worries

From Dr W. E. Ormerod

Sir, Your series of articles on research and development (December 14-17) emphasises the difference between these two components of the process of scientific advance and its exploitation. On the one hand, research, typified by the approach of Dr Max Perutz (December 16), is essentially an individual process of which the objectives are, by their very nature, unknown; workers therefore have to be encouraged to follow their own initiative, whatever the views of their superiors.

On the other hand development, of which Sir Francis Tombs (December 17) is represented as the prime exponent, involves active direction towards the achievement of objectives that have already been identified. The contrast between the two processes is one which the Government should take into account.

During the past 40 years in which I have been involved in university biomedical research there has been a steady trend towards directed research and away from the individual approach. Workers, often well supported by external funding bodies for their research, are increasingly prevented by internal differences of opinion from carrying it out.

There is little doubt that such unpopular work will no longer be carried out once "tenured" appointments have been abolished.

One of the essentials of academic life is that differences of opinion should be respected: it is clear that the side of an argument which appears to be winning is likely to command more resources than the side which appears to be losing. Nevertheless, if truth is ultimately to emerge, it is important, to say the least, that counter-arguments should not be suppressed.

The importance of free argument is widely acknowledged in fields such as political science, history and economics, but it is at least as important in natural science. The present trend in university science towards more powerful direction, loss of the tenured appointment and now the inhibition of research in smaller departments will make the suppression of individual views and arguments much easier.

This trend may increase the "efficiency" of British universities but it is certain to diminish the originality of British science. I am, yours faithfully,

W. E. ORMEROD,
The Old Rectory, Padworth
Reading, Berkshire,
December 17.

'Crockford's' preface

From Dr Sheridan Gilley

Sir, The Archbishop of York (December 18) denies that he called the *Crockford's* preface "scurrilous" because he only described certain charges in the document as "scurrilous".

The layman less well versed in casuistry than his Grace might consider that a document containing "scurrilous" charges was rightly called "scurrilous", and indeed that the man who made the charges was to be regarded as "scurrilous" in making them.

Yours faithfully,
SHERIDAN GILLEY,
University of Durham,
Department of Theology,
Abbey House,
Palace Green,
Durham,
December 18.

From Dr F. Rosen

Sir, In his article entitled "The perniciousness of lying" (December 14) Clifford Longley writes that "It is the moral disease called utilitarianism, which applied to lying makes the consequence of the lie determine its rightness or wrongness".

He seems unaware of the historical fact that the English utilitarians have for at least 200 years strongly favoured freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and political democracy and opposed lying because it threatened the well-being of these institutions.

Lying and secrecy, especially by public figures, diminishes public accountability and endangers freedom.

No utilitarian could have written, as Mr Longley does, that "economy with the truth" is a valid concept, unless it is itself an untruthful synonym for lying.

Yours faithfully,
FREDERICK ROSEN,
General Editor,
The Collected Works of Jeremy Bentham,
Bentham Project, Foster Court,
University College London,
Gower Street, WC1,
December 15.

Durbar Court

From Lord Wyatt of Weeford

Sir, The caption to your photograph on December 5 of the Durbar Court said that it was the work of Sir Gilbert Scott. This is untrue. Sir Gilbert was joint architect of the Foreign and India Office buildings with Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820-1877), each receiving 5 per cent of the contract.

Sir Digby was the executive architect and Secretary to the Great Exhibition of 1851, surveyor to the East India Company in 1855 and architect to the Council of India after the 1857 Indian Mutiny. He was one of the 28 architects in my family.

Yours faithfully,
WYATT OF WEEFORD,
19 Cavendish Avenue, NW8.

Turning point in child-abuse cases

From Mr Louis Blom-Cooper, QC

Sir, I would not dissent from Mr David Dale's view (article, December 19) that child-abuse inquiries are inordinately costly, both in purely financial terms and in their debilitating impact on social workers generally and particularly on the few unfortunate enough to have made mistakes in cases where the child has died as a result of parental abuse. But Mr Dale omits to mention that the report of the commission of inquiry into the Kimberley Carlie case, which I was privileged to chair, has specifically rung the death knell of similarly expensive inquiries.

The commission has recommended that in future, where an independent inquiry is deemed necessary, because of public disquiet, it should normally be conducted either by a standing panel of inquiry established by the relevant area review committee or by the local Ombudsman. Only very exceptionally should there be a full-blown public inquiry, and then (as in the case of Cleveland) it should usually be a statutory inquiry set up by the secretary of state.

In the light of the criticism that the commission ought not to have recommended that Mr Martin Ruddock "should not in the future perform any of the statutory functions in relation to child protection" may I add that I and my fellow commissioners greatly welcome the possibility of re-employing Mr Ruddock in a capacity not involving direct handling of a child-abuse case.

Yours sincerely,
LOUIS BLOM-COOPER,
2 Richmond Crescent, N1,
December 20.

From the Director of Social Services for Greenwich

Sir, I agree with many of the concerns stated by David Dale, including his commendation of Martin Ruddock's honest statement to the Kimberley Carlie inquiry. Matters have now moved on.

On December 17 Mr Blom-Cooper discussed his report with the social services committee in Greenwich. The committee recommended that Mr Ruddock's skills should not be lost to the personal social services.

While duly noting the Kimberley report's proposed restriction on his future work on child-protection cases, the committee agreed that he should be favourably considered, if he applied, for other social work jobs in Greenwich, or in the voluntary sector, or in other social services departments.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN MANBY, Director of Social Services,
London Borough of Greenwich,
Nelson House,
50 Wellington Street,
Woolwich, SE18,
December 21.

I would be very happy to give our sincere thanks to our many friends in England who were thinking of us. During all our trying times we took our courage from the fact that we were not abandoned and not forgotten. We thank very much not only our Jewish friends, but many Christians whose support of us clearly shows that it is not only a voice of blood or religion, but first of all the voice of conscience. We are so grateful to all of them.

With our very best wishes and many thanks again from all of my family.

Yours sincerely,
LEV SHAPIRO,
Canal Gribovskaya 80, Apt 13,
Leningrad 19068, USSR,
December 17.

From Mr John J. Harding

Sir, Your newspaper recently reported again (November 27) the Prime Minister's huge self-inflicted burden of work and a sudden fainting fit brought on by it.

May one slip in a plea for a principle discounted by prime ministers and others these days — namely, that among other things that the human factor requires is a whole day off work regularly once a week. Our forefathers, believing equally with her in six days of hard work, found the principle a valid one. And whether it is called a "sabbath" or not, at a time of rethinking British social ideology we might all find that we are on to a good thing.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN J. HARDING,
191 Sandyhills Road, Glasgow.

Charitable thoughts

From Mr W. K. F. Woodford

Sir, I wonder how many families will follow our tradition of setting an extra place at the Christmas dinner table for the "unseen guest".

Diners are invited to make a donation to charity, the choice of which being made in turn by each member of the family.

Yours truly,
KEN WOODFORD,
Yonderwood, Osney Hill Farm,
Witney, Oxfordshire,
December 20.

From Mr H. P. Gorge

Sir, In Belgium special stamps are on sale for the Christmas season, bearing a surcharge of 1 franc on the normal 15 franc postage fee. The additional revenue thus received is distributed to charities.

The Post Office in Britain handles millions of letters a day during the Christmas season, and would this not be a golden opportunity to adopt a similar scheme? If all Christmas stamps bore a surcharge of 1p and were used by only a quarter of the people sending cards and letters, well over £1 million would be collected for charity.

It is not too early to start planning for next Christmas! Yours faithfully,
H. P. GORGE,
Rue Souveraine 68,
1050 Brussels, Belgium.

From Mrs Mary C. Smith

Sir, There were no fewer than nine Father Christmases parading around our local shopping centre yesterday, collecting for charity. What must that have done to the wide-eyed innocent beliefs of the under-fives?

Sincerely yours,
MARY C. SMITH,
2 Fordington Road,
Highgate, N6,
December 20.

ON THIS DAY

DECEMBER 23 1936

In spite of the heroic efforts of the England cricket captain, G. O. Allen, the critics were shown to be not too wide of the mark in their estimate of the team, for England lost the last three Tests in Australia and the series 3-2.

Two Up

The captain of the English XI in Australia has been almost scandalously successful. For a second time he has confounded the critics who seem to see so much more from the pavilion than the players observe in the field; and this time he has defied them as well. When play finished at Sydney on Saturday England had scored 498 for six wickets after two days of dogged rather than sparkling batting; and HAMMOND, whose form has been magnificent during the present tour, was not out with 231 runs to his credit. Play had been stopped by rain on Saturday; there was more rain on Sunday, and so ALLEN, knowing that Australian batsmen do not shine on rain-damaged turf, declared the innings closed — an unusual experiment in the "timeless" cricket of Antipodean Test matches — and with the aid of VOICE and VERITY dismissed Australia for a mere eighty runs.

The roller was expected to improve the pitch, but ALLEN instead of going in again with a load of 346 runs, made his opponents follow on. Cricketers and plain common or garden cricket journalists, English and Australian alike, were horror-stricken. To put the Australians in again on a wicket from which all vice had been driven by the roller was to expect a series of going in again with a load of 346 runs, made his opponents follow on. Cricketers and plain common or garden cricket journalists, English and Australian alike, were horror-stricken. To put the Australians in again on a wicket from which all vice had been driven by the roller was to expect a series of going in again with a load of 346 runs, made his opponents follow on.

Tuesday brought justification with it. The dreaded centuries were not scored, though McCABE, who evidently played a fine innings, came near one. Within an hour after tea the match was over: England had won the second of the five Tests by an innings and 22 runs, and the last was won by the audacious ALLEN and the "weak" "unrepresentative" and generally unsatisfactory team which was so sharply criticized or, worse, so patronizingly pitied before the first Test match. Leadership has obviously played a great part in this second success; the rain, it is true, helped, and one of the best Australian bats was incapacitated by illness; but the chief credit for a notable victory goes to the English captain, whose tactics showed that he had not overrated the moral ascendancy which his side had acquired in the previous Test. With two matches up and three more to play his eleven are now in a most favourable position for the New Year match at Melbourne. The Australians will have to show very much better form — and, let it be added, have a rather larger slice of the luck — if they are to reverse the verdict of the games at Brisbane and Sydney.

BETTER RENTED THAN REPOSSESSED

Repossession of homes because of default on mortgage repayments is still, thankfully, rare. It has also, however, grown. The number of mortgage payments in arrears stood at around 53,000 households in the middle of last year — a not insignificant figure in itself. And for those individuals and families who lose their home as result it is a calamity. It throws them on the mercies of DHSS officers and compilers of council housing waiting lists. Those are not tender.

Since the great reform of 1986, the traditionally paternalist building societies have become more like other large financial institutions. It would be futile to expect from them the attitudes of parochial sources of housing funds. Their branch managers, working to performance targets, have less space than before for generosity towards home-owners in arrears. All the pressure is for generating income from borrowers. This leads necessarily to a greater vigilance when accounts fall behind.

The population of mortgagors has broadened. The right to buy council houses has expanded the ranks of borrowers for whom monthly obligations are stretching. The problem is likely to worsen in consequence.

It ought to be no act of altruism on the building societies' part to minimize the rate of repossession. They benefit by maximizing the capacity of their borrowers to pay interest. They ought to do their utmost to avoid

compulsory sale over the heads of their mortgagors.

More investment in advice would be useful. A healthy donation each year to the local Citizens Advice Bureau by local building society branches would not come amiss; nor would support for innovations like the Birmingham debt hotline. There could be better counselling of borrowers and sharper assessment of risk.

The Government's new housing plans have potential here. One is to improve access to home-ownership for families who might be able to afford only a part of the equity of their homes: shared ownership schemes.

Building societies are increasingly encouraged to see a role for themselves as landlords. This is not just as a way of extending their portfolio of investments but an adjunct to their lending for home purchase. There are some people in home ownership who might have been more comfortable in rented property, especially property to which some opportunity to purchase might at some stage be attached.

Home ownership should — and will — rise. But there has been an insufficient pattern of choice of tenures and in some cases the burdens of home ownership have been underestimated. The expanding role of the societies in building for rent is the best way of heading off any further growth in repossessions.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, DEATHS

PERSONAL COLUMNS

BIRTHS

BUCHANAN - On December 17th, to Bridget (née Danks) and Robin, a daughter.

CARDALE - On December 18th, at St Mary's, Paddington to Philippa (née Ginn) and Mark, a daughter (Elin).

CHASE - On December 21st, to Chai (née Kats) and Simon, a son.

CLIFFORD - On December 18th, at Watford General Hospital, to Charlotte (née Johnson) and Frank, a daughter, Rosemary Eleanor.

ENROLL - On December 21st, to Isabelle (née Auld) and John, a daughter, Lady Isabelle.

FLINCH - See Weston.

FOSTER - On December 19th, to Sarah (née Taylor) and Peter, a son.

MANOCHTIN - On December 21st, to Thomas (née Thomas) and Sarah, a daughter, Charlotte.

REARD - On December 19th, to Keel, to Diane (née Taylor) and Trevor, a daughter, Natalie Emma.

STANLEY - On December 18th, to Karen (née Thomas) and John, a son, Thomas.

WESTON - On December 20th, to Caroline (née Hill) and Geoffrey, a son, Peter John.

WILLIS - On December 20th, to Caroline (née Hill) and Geoffrey, a son, Peter John.

GOLDEN ANNIVERSARIES

DAVISON - On December 23rd, 1937, at St Catherine's Church, Barbican, London, to John and Dorothy, now at Barbican, North Yorkshire.

DEATHS

BEVAN - On December 19th, 1987, very peacefully at home, Mrs. Bevan, nee Jones, aged 80. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London. A daughter, Mrs. Jones, nee Bevan, aged 80, died on December 19th, 1987. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London.

BIRD - On December 20th, 1987, peacefully at home, Mrs. Bird, nee Jones, aged 80. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London.

BOWERS - On December 20th, 1987, at home, Mrs. Bowers, nee Jones, aged 80. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London.

BREWER - On December 21st, at home, Mrs. Brewer, nee Jones, aged 80. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London.

BROOKS - On December 20th, 1987, at home, Mrs. Brooks, nee Jones, aged 80. Buried at St. Mary's Church, London.

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LONDON

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

British divers to explore Chinese underground river

China has asked British cave divers to explore the Tisu River, thought to be the largest underground river in the world.

Four Britons will be in a party of 18 that will travel to Guangxi province next week on a five-week expedition to explore the area's largely uncharted cave systems.

The giant underground caverns contain the Tisu, whose volume of water is equivalent to that of the Thames. Chinese scientists want to discover its route through the limestone and to help the development of irrigation, hydro-power and anti-pollution systems.

However, they lack the expertise to dive into the flooded underground passages.

Many members of the British team have already made successful cave explorations in South-East Asia and it was their exploits that led the Chinese to seek their help.

Last month, a British team of nine returned from the Guangxi province in south-east China where they worked in areas normally closed to Europeans, mapping 12 miles of previously unknown caves, including the deepest cave in China, Wu Jia Dong, at 1,383ft.

Mr Dick Willis, who was with that expedition and is planning the new project, said that the main party would go to China on Monday.

The cave divers are Mr Rob Parker and Mr Gavin Newman, from Bristol, Mr Geoff Crossley, from Leeds, and Mr Steve Jones, from Carmarthen.

The British team has a number of sponsors but each member is also paying £750 towards his costs. They will work with scientists from the Guilin Karst Institute.

Mr Willis said: "The Chinese do not have the expertise and techniques for deep and difficult caving. We will be involved also in training some of their people when we are there."

"Two Chinese will probably return with us in the new year and spend some months in England. We see these expeditions as an ongoing exchange programme."



Pope John Paul II reading his Christmas message to the Sacred College of Cardinals in Rome yesterday. Afterwards the Pope said he intended soon to release an encyclical to follow Pope Paul VI's pronouncement on social justice in 1967.

Jodrell Bank seeks holy star

Britain's astronomers have the star of Bethlehem in their sights. Staff at Jodrell Bank radio telescope at Holmes Chapel, Cheshire are showing an image of the sky as it may have been 2,000 years.

In their planetarium they have recreated the sky as it might have been seen by the three wise men and the shepherds that first Christmas.

They are putting on shows offering three astronomical hypotheses as to what the holy star might have been.

Planetarium operator Maurice Layzell said it may have been a conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, a sighting of Halley's Comet or the bright star Altair in the Aquila the Eagle constellation.

She added: "We will never know what it really was and there is always the fourth option - that the star of Bethlehem was an act of God."

MP may hold 'surgery' for Dartmoor inmates

By Andrew Morgan

Aggrieved inmates in Dartmoor Prison could soon be lining up for consultations with Miss Emma Nicholson, the local Conservative MP, who visits the top security jail today. The MP, who represents Devon West and Torridge, is hoping that regular meetings might help to defuse tension at the prison, where a minor riot broke out earlier this year. Morale at the category-B jail has not been helped by votes of no confidence in the governor, Mr John May, and by a number of escapes.

Miss Nicholson will break the ice when she talks with some of the 630 prisoners and their guards today. She is hoping a room will be made available for monthly meetings with inmates wishing to discuss grievances in confidence.

She said: "Prisoners do not have a vote and that is why I think MPs should be more sensitive to their needs, not less. I get a lot of letters from prisoners and it occurred to me that Christmas would be a good time of year to start surgeries in Dartmoor. It is clear there is a need."

"Prisoners tell me as a last resort they write to me about claims that they are being bullied, about the physical environment they live in and about food. You get occasions when one prisoner working in the kitchens has a grudge against another prisoner and he will put slugs in the other man's food. These are the kind of things I will discuss."

"Unless I am told something of a criminal nature everything will be confidential. When you are in jail for a long time with little to look forward to, small grievances must be magnified dramatically. I will be happy to discuss anything."

Miss Nicholson said she was not unduly concerned about sitting alone with dangerous criminals, including rapists and murderers. "I am sure we will get on very well. I always have someone within calling distance for protection but I do not envisage any difficulties."

The governor was not available for comment yesterday.

Microchip check for stolen pets

Owners who see stolen animals in pet shop windows will, in future, be able to prove the pet belongs to them - thanks to microchip technology.

Now a £30 implant, developed in the United States, is all that is needed to identify a pet. A tiny glass tube is inserted under local anaesthetic, and the microchip contains a number easily read by electronic waves.

Extra trains to cope with the holiday crowds

By Rodney Cowton, Transport Correspondent

British Rail is running about 350 extra trains to accommodate the Christmas and New Year holiday rush. But this high level of activity will be suspended for two days when services throughout the United Kingdom come to a halt from 10pm tomorrow for Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

A few long distance trains will continue to their destinations after that time but on nearly all routes the last train will be timed to complete its journey by 10 o'clock.

Among the trains travelling after that are the 17.30 from London, arriving at Penzance at 22.52, the 18.50 from London arriving at Holyhead at 23.37, and the 17.30 from London due to reach Glasgow at 22.50.

There will be no sleeper services, and no trains will run on either Christmas Day or Boxing Day.

In London, there will be neither Underground nor bus services on Christmas Day, except for a restricted bus service to Heathrow airport.

P & O European ferries will operate no cross-Channel sailings on either Christmas Day or Boxing Day, though its Belgian partner, Regie Voor Maritiem Transport, will make four sailings each way between Dover and Ostende on Boxing Day. Sealink British Ferries will have no sailings on Christmas Day nor, on many routes, on Boxing Day.

Outline of main services:

British Rail

Christmas Eve: Normal weekday service with some extra trains during the early part of the day. Some evening business and commuter trains will not run.

Christmas Day and Boxing Day: No services.

December 27: Modified Sunday service.

December 28: Revised weekday service with additional trains later in the day. Some early morning business and commuter trains will not run, and a modified Sunday service will be provided in much of the Network SouthEast area.

December 29 and 30: Some additional trains will supplement a modified weekday service, and some early morning and commuter trains will not run.

New Year's Eve: In Scotland, last trains will generally run before 10pm. There will be no overnight trains except for the Irish Mail boat trains to and from Holyhead. In England and Wales, there will be a modified weekday service, and some late trains will not run.

New Year's Day: There will be no trains in Scotland, but a modified weekday service will operate on most other lines. Some early morning trains will not run.

New Year's Day: Normal service.

London buses:

December 24: Normal services on daytime routes, but no all-night buses.

Christmas Day: No service, apart from Victoria to Heathrow Airport.

Boxing Day: Special services starting at about 8am on restricted routes or sections of routes.

December 27 and 28: Normal Sunday services on most routes.

December 29 and 30: Normal Saturday service on most routes.

New Year's Eve: Day buses will provide a Saturday service, but there will be extra night services, with the central London pick-up point at Aldwych.

New Year's Day: Sunday routes and services.

THE ARTS

TELEVISION

Festive laughs at last

Before television atrocity set in for the week, it was good to have one festive special which showed some genuine seasonal wit. Since it did not include guest appearances by Wogan, Cilla, the two Romies or David Coleman, this was clearly not a product of good old British television. As it was funny, crisp and included passing references to the Hart Detective Agency, *Dynasty*, and as many other Hollywood models as parody-hunters could find, it was obviously *Moonlighting* (BBC2).

Doubtless encouraged by its destructionist Christmas edition last year, this show pulled a more affectionate trick: a re-run of "It's A Wonderful Life", where the hero — or in this case Maddie as the reluctant heroine — gets a chance to see the effect of her Scrooge-like Christmas attitudes.

It was beautifully done: Maddie, too busy to see her dying aunt, too concerned with the business to give anybody in the office a Christmas break, finds her world collapsing around her and goes out to get drunk. Enter a pick-up who turns out to be her guardian angel. In a dream, he gives her a taste of the bitter life she faces if she carries on with her miserable ways.

Moonlighting has it all: the classy line, the deft acting, the wonderful eye for creating a clichéd situation. There is also a spiffy ability to create new parodies: Agnes is transported to a Coby-like office as head of an ad-agency where all the employees have to talk in rhyme.

The puzzle must be why, when so much can and wit is lavished on a single programme like this, most of the rest of these American series look as if they have just stepped out of the sausage machine.

William Holmes

A slob with genius

Fatty Arbuckle's comic talent is entertaining a new generation.

David Robinson looks back at his tempestuous life

This year has marked the definitive rehabilitation of Roscoe Arbuckle. Sixty-six years ago Hollywood and history committed a terrible injustice to Arbuckle, and virtually erased his name from record. Now, with the celebration at the Pordenone Festival of his centenary, he has re-emerged triumphantly as one of the very great clowns of silent cinema, along with Chaplin, Keaton and Harold Lloyd.

For eight years, between 1913 and 1921, Arbuckle was rivalled only by Charlie Chaplin as the best-loved (and highest paid) comedian in the world.

The laughter stopped (as Arbuckle's closest friend, Buster Keaton, put it) on the weekend of Labour Day, 1921. Arbuckle and some friends took off for a jaunt at the Saint Francis Hotel, San Francisco. Despite prohibition, the drinks flowed freely, and in the drizzle of the hectic party, a young bit-player called Virginia Rappe became ill. A few days later she died in hospital. Her paramour, a disliked comedy director called Henry Lehrman, accused Arbuckle of causing Virginia's death by rape.

The scandal erupted at an inopportune time. America was experiencing its fiercest puritan backlash. The war had brought the emancipation of women and a general loosening of morals that alarmed Middle America. Along with the reaction came a wave of xenophobia, repression and racism. In the first great Red Scare of early 1920, 2,000 foreigners were arrested. The Ku-Klux-Klan moved into full activity. An Indiana jury acquitted a murderer on the grounds that his victim had said "Down with America". Prohibition came into force in January 1920.

The zealous and reformers saw Hollywood and its works as the new Sodom. The Arbuckle scandal gave them exactly the weapon they needed, and he was put on trial in early 1921. David Yallop's scholarly analysis of the court transcripts in his book *The Day the Laughter Stopped*, shows that there was never a real case.

Though a team of private investigators was hired to sniff out fresh scandals (they included a Pinkerton agent called Deshaile Hammett), and despite a wealth of false evidence and the efforts of the judge himself to get witnesses to perjure themselves, two juries failed to

agree and the third acquitted Arbuckle with a full apology.

Though the courts might acquit him, the pressure groups, the women's clubs and the sensational press were not to be denied a witch-burning. Virginia (though the court heard hair-raising stories of her sexual history) was cast as Beauty and Arbuckle as the Beast. "His weight condemned him", said one of his lawyers.

Hollywood panicked. As proof of their good intentions, the producers hired Will Hays, the former Postmaster General, at \$100,000 a year to head a self-regulatory industry body. (The notorious "Hays Code" was to censor film content for the next 40 years.) Hays' first move was to decree that Arbuckle should no longer be allowed to work in the studios. Paramount sacrificed a huge investment by scrapping all his films.

Boycotted everywhere, Arbuckle's rotund body and comical



Best friend: Buster Keaton

face vanished from the screen and from memories. His friends gave him work as a director under the name of Will B. Goodrich, and in 1933 he attempted a come-back in a series of talkie shorts. But the old acrobatic clowning proved too strenuous for an obese man of 46; he died suddenly in a New York hotel on the night of 29 June 1933.

The mud proved remarkably adhesive. If Arbuckle was ever recalled, it was only as the central actor in the greatest Hollywood scandal, which inspired James Ivory's 1975 film *The Wild Party*. His films remained unseen.

Pordenone — a festival which assembles everyone who is anyone in the world of film archives and history — put the record straight. The indefatigable Pordenone organizers retrieved from the cobwebs of film history no less than 40 films, which proved a revelation.

Buster Keaton, who started his film career as Arbuckle's partner, claimed that his fat friend taught him everything. The rhythms of Arbuckle's comedy and the prodigality of his invention are astonishing. The films are so rich in material that a gag reel in any contemporary comedy is thrown away in a couple of seconds.

The physical skills of this generation of comedians was astounding. Despite his great bulk, Arbuckle was phenomenally agile and, paradoxically, graceful. His flesh was hard-packed, nowhere flabby. He fell like a rubber ball. He was ambidextrous and could throw custard pies with deadly accuracy in two directions at the same time.

The big surprise today is his charm. He is unique in the immediacy of his contact with the audience. The moment he looks out of the screen and gives a grin, a wink or a grimace of apprehension, we are won. (It is worth remarking his remarkable physical resemblance to Benny Hill.) He is as innocent, mischievous and engaging as a child, and his sexual and scatological innuendoes have an inoffensive, infantile quality.

It is easy to recall the thrill of anticipation his first audiences must have felt the moment he bounced on screen. One look and we know we are in for joyous mayhem, an orgy of flying missiles, tumbling clowns and breaking china.

All this Fatty faces with equanimity.



Big talent: Arbuckle with Harriet Hammon in the 1921 film Leap Year

If he sets his bed on fire, he stands a moment or two watching the inferno with puzzled interest, before smothering it with a cup of water to deal with it. Of course he absently drinks it on the way, for Fatty samples any comestible on sight.

He loved disguises and is never funnier than when geared up as a gargantuan schoolgirl, nurse or winsome bride. Fatty always goes all the way: he thinks nothing of letting a horse sit on his head, so long as it gets a laugh — which it does. Roscoe Arbuckle is back, and new audiences can anticipate a lot of fun with him.

Pordenone celebrated another fat funny man, John Bunny, who preceded Arbuckle by only a year or so, but can be reckoned the first star comic of American film. Bunny also enjoyed massive international popularity between 1912 and his early death in 1915; but in contrast

to Arbuckle, his mild situation comedies — with none of the speed and suppleness of the Keystone Studios, where Arbuckle began — have small appeal today.

Bunny appeared in the context of Pordenone's other main retrospective, a sample of 200 films made by the Vitaphone Company, whose career from 1896 to the Twenties embodies the whole early history of American film.

The festival is famous for its shows of silent films with live music. This year there was a revival of the Thames Television presentation of King Vidor's *The Big Parade*, with the Lubiana Big Orchestra under Carl Davis; a thrilling rediscovery of Ernst Lubitsch's supremely sophisticated adaptation of *Lady Windermere's Fan*; and a bizarre rarity from Holland, John Gildemeister's 1917 *Gloria Trassila*, which calls for (and was given) sung parts by operatic voices.

CONCERT

Solemn chants follow jesters

New London Consort QEH

In the normal way of things, music critics are supposed to write about music. But if I am to explain properly what happened at this "Medieval Christmas Extravaganza", the fourth event in the South Bank's "Sounds in Time" early music series, I must ask you, dear reader, to bear with some digression for a paragraph or two.

That is because the evening was more like a variety show than anything else. Though the attending multitude, which included a large contingent of families with young children, seemed well prepared for that.

They were attracted, no doubt, by the prospect of watching all the jesters and jugglers and dancers at work, and perhaps even by the terrorizing antics in the foyer of Boris the Bear, played by a growing young woman with suspicious relish.

There was nothing specifically medieval about that, and neither was there, except perhaps in its historical roots, about the act performed on stage by a troupe called Fool's Paradise.

Their leader nevertheless demonstrated a quite dazzling circus technique, juggling with up to five balls and with authentic looking scythes and daggers, and playing to the full his assumed role of court jester.

Meanwhile, his two colleagues danced on high stilts, though not nearly so forcefully as the (earthbound) men of Albion Morris, who performed a traditional Mummers' Dance.

Besides such ebullient entertainment, much of the music performed by the New London Consort seemed incongruously solemn, particularly that in the first half of the concert.

It began with singers and players clad in white monks' habits (and holding electric candles) processing to the stage in darkness after singing the *Te Deum* chant in parallel octaves and fifths in the lobby.

Once arrived, they performed, with some discreet decorations and drones added by David Robiou at the organ, the 13th-century Christmas religious drama known as the *Officium Pastorum*, and afterwards gave a varied selection of motets from the same period, including Perotin's magnificent *Vide prophetias*.

The music in the second half, however, became less austere as it progressed through the following two centuries, so that by the time we heard the carols "Nowell, Nowell" and "Sing We To This Merry Company" the atmosphere of festivity had spread irresistibly from secular to sacred.

Stephen Pettitt

● The sixth and final Reith Lecture, "The Survival of the Symphony" by Alexander Goehr, Professor of Music at Cambridge, will be broadcast tonight on Radio 4 at 9.15pm, and repeated on Radio 3 on Sunday.

DANCE ON TV

Sensible choice. For ballet on Christmas Day, BBC2 has picked the equivalent of a box of chocolates, leaving the solid meal for Boxing Day.

White Nights of Dance (Christmas Day, 4.55pm) records a unique collaboration between the Kirov Ballet and Maurice Béjart's company in Leningrad last summer, filmed in empty parks and squares as well as historic buildings. What if cars can be glimpsed dimly behind the *Swan Lake* duet? With the dancing of Galina Mezentsova and Constantin Zaklinsky, it doesn't matter.

The selection made from the original long programme omits any example of Béjart's dancers in the classics, but shows the Russians looking perfectly at home in Béjart's choreography.

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Unfamiliar items include a tantalizingly short glimpse of Petipa's "enchanted garden" scene from *The Corsair*. Béjart's 1830, specially made for the occasion, is absurdly, unintentionally funny, an evocation of revolution to Meyerbeer's skating music and a snatch of Verdi. Even the formidable Faruk Ruzimatov cannot save that, but he is intense and witty with Altinai Assylmuratova in Béjart's *Adam* and Eve duet, and takes part in the best item of all: four men, two from each company, swaggering and showing off like mad to a Neoplatonic popular song.

Cinderella (Boxing Day, 7.40pm) is Nureyev's transposition of the Prokofiev ballet to 1930s Hollywood. Choreographed for a big cast and a vast stage, its ensemble themes lose something on the small screen. But you must not miss Cinderella's solo which slides neatly from a Chaplin imitation to a homage to Astaire, nor her dewy-eyed duets with the film star hero.

A brief word for *Bisley's Most* (December 11, 7.05-8pm) in which BBC2 shows the Royal Ballet at its best in rehearsals and performance of *Galathea*.

John Percival

Plot lurches from one star turn to the next

THEATRE

Babes in the Wood London Palladium

You do not expect much in the way of story-telling from the Palladium panto and you certainly do not get it in this year's best-hedging transposition of the babes to Sherwood Forest.

As Bryan Blackburn tells it, they are heirs to the crown dumped on their wicked uncle, who in his routine job as Sheriff of Nottingham is too busy enticing Maid Marion into his skull-littered town hall and fending off the outlaws to have much time for serious villainy.

Each story cancels out the other in a show that lurches from one speciality act to the next without suspense, pathos, or arousing any interest in what happens next.

Most of the energy goes into adapting pantomime routines to the routines of its stars: and as the bill is topped by Cannon and Ball, the prevailing atmosphere is one of loud Northern knockabout concentrated around the pelvic area and a rival song-sheet finale in which the partners try to divide the house along the lines of rival football fans.

Between whiles they do their stuff as two incompetent robbers hired to do away with the babes, but they are happiest when they escape from plot into wholesale crockery smashing. They also have a wounding encounter with Rod Hull and his lethal bird; very funny while it lasts.

The company also includes such panto veterans as Barbara Windsor and Derek Griffiths, as the Good Fairy and the demon sheriff, who would be fine if they had anything to do beyond hissing derision and delivering fairytale puns.

John Inman, at least, gets a fair deal as the Dame, with an

extravagant sequence of costume changes including a strip routine unwinding into a washing line, and the chance to play schoolmistress, nurse, and ambulatory traffic beacon as well as the babes' nurse.

What is left of the story falls mainly to Marti Webb's Robin Hood and to the babes themselves, who are credited with enough cheek to stir the murderous impulses of the kindest uncle. Miss Webb sings beautifully; but she is no swashbuckler, and receives the full brunt of Mr Blackburn's dialogue appearing disguised as a "little tinker" only so that her enemy can be described as a "big stinker".

Michael Hurli's production contains a good deal of empty pageantry and maladroitness; but it does go to town on the Nottingham fair with a pair of stilted puppets (Sue and Peter Barbour) who even convert the babes into marionettes.

Irving Wardle



In good voice: Marti Webb sings beautifully as Robin Hood

Smothered by sentiment

GALLERIES

Beatrix Potter Tate

Has Beatrix Potter failed to be recognized as a major figure in turn-of-the-century art because of male chauvinist prejudice? Or was she prevented from realizing her proper potential by the same vile conspiracy? These are not questions which would normally spring to mind, but from eavesdropping on several impassioned conversations at the opening of the Tate Gallery's rather lavish and well-appointed tribute to the artist and her world (until January 31), I gather that it is a perspective which many feel should be taken into account.

The basic answer, surely, is no. Even if her illustrations, and indeed her writings, are contemptuously dismissed as ladylike, over-concerned with daintiness and cosiness, and doing all the things that women have long since proved they need not do in the arts, there seems to be little or no evidence that she saw herself as compelled to do anything she did not herself want to do. What makes the work so satisfactory and resistant to dating, in fact, is its air of being as it is because it is the natural and unfettered expression of its maker's sensibilities.

Which is not necessarily to say that Beatrix Potter never worked when she did not wish to, and never had any

Only adults find Beatrix Potter too cosy. Children see her in the proper light, John Russell Taylor reports

reservations about her working conditions. She was, after all, a professional. And if there is one thing this show underlines, it is the degree of her professionalism. Not only are there innumerable examples of her careful studies of animals from the life, but we see the actual pieces of 18th-century clothing she studied at the Victoria and Albert to get the period details in *The Tailor of Gloucester* absolutely right, documentation on the way she chose to make it the visual background for so many of her stories, and such not unimportant details as her studies of furniture, archaeology and plant life.

Many of these preparatory drawings, or drawings of purely scientific intent, like the microscopic studies of butterfly wings, are very beautiful in themselves. But it is the finished illustrations upon which her reputation stands or falls — a vital question as the prospect looms of her coming out of copyright. We can observe in this show how inevitably even the most carefully supervised reproduction falls short of the original in delicacy and precision.

So many of the designs are of incomparable but not impossible delicacy. Witness the tiny, early design for a Christmas card in the form of an occupied fieldmouse nest which unfolds to reveal its secrets in a compass not much bigger than a walnut. It is interesting also to see the continuity of her concerns: the series of watercolour drawings called "The Rabbits' Christmas Party", never reproduced and here exhibited together in Britain for the first time, seems to date from the Nineties, but it is recorded that when she looked at it again in 1927 she was appalled by how badly she had drawn the rabbits' feet, and sketched in a more accurate alternative on the spot.

Apart from which, just considered in its own merits the first drawing, "The Arrival", with its boldly formalized blue-grey shapes, cunningly up-mixed Rembrandt's "Paraphrase" without our being at all disconcerted at any inherent disproportion in our responses.

There still remains the question of whether Beatrix Potter is finally as nice and cosy as people like to think. While there is not necessarily anything wrong with the nice and the



Detailed: The Tailor Mouse

cosy, those who feel some sort of puritan opprobrium attached to the concept can take comfort here by noting that Beatrix Potter's prose style is as crisp and cool and ironic as Jane Austen's, and her illustrations have a similar elegant detachment: they are never fuzzy, either visually or emotionally. Children, if they like her at all, take to her as they take to Lewis Carroll, as an agreeably astringent and bracing companion in the nursery. Grown-ups, of course, forget, seeing her through an obscuring haze of adult sentimentality. But as this show manifestly demonstrates, the children know best.

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WEDNESDAY PAGE

Doing away with the manger?

And is it true? And is it true
This most tremendous tale of all,
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,
A baby in an Ox's stall?
The Maker of the stars and sea
Become a Child on earth for me?

In a lukewarm and largely agnostic nation, John Betjeman's question - Is it true? - is one that can be happily dodged for most of the year and fudged at Christmas. It is probably fair to say that a large sector of Britain now treats religion as a quaint medieval ornament, a sort of linenfold panelling of the mind behind which run the hard wires and plumbing of rationalism. We like white weddings and Remembrance Sunday, but studiously avoid mentioning God or applying the rather alarming moral teachings of His son to business, politics, or personal relationships. Parish Anglicanism being the stiff-upper-lipped thing it is, this is a state of affairs which is surprisingly comfortable and easy to maintain.

Until, that is, you become a parent and confront the confusions of Christmas. There are enough neo-pagan symbols around, of course, to be getting on with: trees, mistletoe, Father Christmas. But at the heart of it all lie the carols and the crib: the Nativity may be prettified and sentimentalized (as the Bishop of Durham complained this week) but despite the best efforts of multicultural and humanist lobbies, it remains central. Children seem to like the Christmas story. They like the crib in the church (or, indeed, in the off-licence window), and they like crooning "Away in a Manger" and dressing up as shepherds.

However - and here comes the confusion - from the age of four or five years old, children also happen to like facts. They submit us to relentless interrogation, in which the trivial jests with the momentous: Was Jesus alive in the real world, Mum? Granny says the animals kneel down on Christmas night and say halloleluah, do they, Mum? Is Jesus God? Is he still the Lord of Earth and Heaven? Was he bed made of straw? What's a saviour?

Agnostic parents face a confusing time at Christmas, under interrogation by their nativity play starlets. Libby Purves reports on the battle between sacred and profane

Pre-wheeling, half-believing or agnostic parents bluster unconvincedly under this hail of stern questions. There is a certain dry and regrettable comedy to be extracted, at this time of year, from watching neo-church-goers twisting themselves in knots to get some Christ-massy-yet-rational message across to their small inquisitors.

It is not only agnostics who have trouble: plenty of families on the progressive wing of the Christian churches have their own explaining to do (remember the Virgin Birth controversy: David Jenkins is far from being alone in his theological-historical subtleties of perception). Only the simplest of Bible Christians has no problem.

At the other end of the spectrum, I managed - with some difficulty - to find a couple so hostile to all manifestations of religion that they actually deny the lot to their children of eight and five years old. "We won't have a crib, or hang up a card with a crib on it," says Susan firmly. "Christmas trees and santas, OK, we tell them it's a winter festival and a tradition. But we both feel that so much of the world's evils come from superstition and sectarianism that it would be an act of hypocrisy to tell our children the Christmas story. They get it at school,



Children at the heart of Christmas: "despite the best efforts of multicultural lobbies, the crib and Nativity remain central"

but we tell them it's just an old-fashioned piece of nonsense. There isn't a nativity play there, anyway, thank goodness."

More typical, probably, of the fine festive middle of the season is Jane O'Hara, who was brought up in a big devoutly Catholic Irish family, but has left the Church and is no longer a believer. With three children, however, she finds herself at this time of year "wobbly and un-together, miserable, flailing about, telling them this and that - I do none of it convincingly." She has always told them the Christmas story, with the rider that "it was all a very long time ago and nobody really knows, but lots of people have believed it through-

out the world", but she collapses in mock despair when asked why. "No, don't ask me, I can't make out any sensible case for anything I do or say. I'm an agnostic, but not even a convinced agnostic."

"My 13-year-old is an utter unbeliever, no stars, no flocks of angels, no God. He's very tolerant, learns about Diwali and Chanukah and Id at school, and about Christmas too. But sometimes I look at him and get so depressed by all this that I want to whip the two little ones safely into a convent... but reason prevails."

John Newbury - from an opposite perspective - also values the cultural residue of cribs and carols. He is a

Methodist minister and a BBC correspondent on religious affairs. His children, now 13 and 15, have grown up with highly liberal Christian teaching. "We've always admitted that the exact date of Jesus' birth isn't known. And we've discussed the probabilities of the Virgin Birth, although the time for that is not when they're off to primary school carrying a tea-towel to be Joseph in."

In his own home he dilutes the sentimentality of the "Little Town of Bethlehem" school: "I have always tried to keep in tension the crib on the sideboard looking lovely, and the pictures of Ethiopia coming out of the television set on the other side. In the

Christmas trees, OK, but we won't hang up a card with a crib on it

context of a family you can say, casually, that Ethiopia is rather more the way it probably was for Mary and Joseph. They need to know that."

However, he is not inclined to complain, like the Bishop of Durham, about the prettification of our folk-tale Christmas story and the brass commercialized cribs. "People say, ugh, a crib in the off-licence - but frankly, I'd be more worried if it wasn't there. This is an untutored post-Christian society, which knows less and less of the raw data of Christianity. When cribs and stuff come out at Christmas, guys like me can use the opportunity to present people with a religious Christmas message. And they can't complain, can they, when they've got the Holy Child next to their holly?"

Agnostic Jane, clearly, would be a sitting duck for such evangelism. "I do a crib for the children because there's a lingering part of me that's like Thomas Hardy, in that poem about the legend of the oxen kneeling at midnight on Christmas Eve. Even when he was a grown man, he said, if someone had asked him to go out and see the beasts kneeling, 'I should go with him in the gloom, hoping it might be so.' That's me. I hope it might be so. It's just that I don't believe it."

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Complements of the season

Why rent-a-designer-dress is taking New York's party circuit by storm...

It is an unwritten - and ruinously expensive - rule of New York social etiquette that no woman should be seen in the same evening gown by the same people twice. This has long posed a problem for anyone without massive reserves of inherited wealth to splash out on outfits in which to impress friends, colleagues and beaux at the whirl of charity, gala and corporate functions which confirm New York's status as the world's most social city.

On Madison Avenue, however, a stone's throw from Ralph Lauren's flagship Rhineland Mansion store, the arrival of a 33-year-old British businesswoman just in time for the frenzied Christmas party season has given New York women a longed-for alternative. Joanna Doniger, whose London-based dress hire company, One Night Stand, has for the past four years come to the sartorial rescue of countless frockless Englishwomen, says:

"It struck me as incredible that in America - a country where it seems one can hire almost anything else - nobody was renting out designer dresses."

Having taken a considerable financial gamble - investing a large sum of her own money, leaving the London shops in the hands of her staff and uprooting herself to Manhattan to raise further capital by a private subscription memorandum - Doniger's venture generated considerable interest via New York's concrete jungle dawns even before the doors of her black, white and gilt stencilled "roccoco bonbon-style" shop were flung open.

Within the first 24 hours, 100 dresses from the 600-frock stock had been hired to delighted New Yorkers at between \$75-\$350 a throw, depending on whether the dress originally cost hundreds, or in the case of top labels, thousands of dollars, surpassing even the ambitious



Joanna Doniger (centre): to the aid of the frockless partygoer

Doniger's predictions. Now she plans a further 20 US shops within three years.

"Some designers are reluctant to sell to us, believing we stop women wandering into Bergdorf's to buy their dresses. But the attitude of top designer Arnold Scaasi, for example, is we want to sell to you because debutantes and young girls will come before they're married and live the dresses. When they marry a nice rich husband, then they'll

buy them!" To cater to status-hungry New Yorkers' cravings for designer labels she will also be showcasing London evening-wear talent like Bruce Oldfield and Belville Sassoon, opening up a whole new market for British style.

Julia Nicolson (who works as Rights Director in the New York office of family firm Weidenfeld & Nicolson) rented a black lace and pink taffeta gown to wear to New York's National Book Awards. "I

didn't want to spend \$1,000 on an outfit for an event which was basically a glorified party," she explains. Gail Bryan, an American married to a British investment banker, wore a black silk and lavender tulle ballgown to the Whitney Museum's annual Halloween bash. "We have to go to at least eight black tie affairs each year," Bryan says. A bonus for One Night Stand's clients: dresses rented for business functions are a tax-deductible expense.

"New York is full of women who have social calendars that would make Jennifer's Diary look dull," says Doniger. "If there's one thing I've discovered, it's that I haven't got anything to wear" is an international lament...

Josephine Fairley

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Transatlantic travellers who want to save suitcase space and leave their pushbells at home can find One Night Stand at 205 Madison Avenue, (212) 772-7720.

Applying science

Nestling between the computer, combustion engines and models of coal mines at South Kensington's Science Museum is an exhibit with a decidedly feminine touch - Kanebo's Bio Lipstick, selected for display because it contains shikoni, a rare, red-coloured root extract from a remote corner of China. It has been used for centuries for its healing, soothing and antiseptic qualities. The lipstick comes in 12 shades (the darker ones contain more shikoni) and cost £12.50 from Kanebo counters in major department stores and chemists, but not, alas, in the museum's own wonderful shop.

And if Kanebo's elegant white and gold packaging is not stylish enough, there's just enough time to add a level of increased lipstick-case to your Dear Santa list. The husbands of New York's ladies who lunch will no doubt be snapping up Eleanore's range of limited edition lipstick-cases, which make anything the Duchesses of Windsor swelled look positively mean. They're priced from \$10,000 right up to \$50,000...

BRIEFLY

A round-up of news, views and information

Quote me...



"I came to accept the idea that I might be considered beautiful. It really is an amazing thing to come to terms with. It protects you from being vain." Baroness Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza

Baby's in black

The matt black revolution has finally reached the nursery. Thanks to Peter Leonard's striking new design for a black, tubular high chair, there is no need to disturb the

monochromatic perfection of your hi-tech dining room. "It was inspired by a book on 18th-century baby chairs, when they were miniaturized replicas of grown-up versions," explains Leonard, whose shop will be stocking the design.

Not suitable for tiny babies, however, the chair is designed without a tray of its own, and Leonard advises that wriggly toddlers should be reined to the frame. Price £95, from Soho, 263 Kings Road, London SW3 (01-376 5855). It has an optional seat cushion available in any colour (including black) or made up in the customer's own fabric.

Under wraps

Why is it that women succeed in having their presents bought, wrapped and under the tree 10 days before Christmas, while men shop like desperate, credit-card-wielding dervishes on Christmas Eve? However, if your presents are still, through some oversight, lying naked in their carrier bags you'll find timely inspiration in Angela Douglas's *Present Affairs* (Ebury Press, £8.95), brimful of imaginative ideas for gift-wrapping.

J. F.

... and how 'designer-free' fragrances became the sweet smell of success

When you idly let slip the perfume you would like to find in your Christmas stocking this year, the name Jean-Pierre Sand is unlikely to spring readily to your lips. But it is this range of 35 different fragrances that earned Max Burton more than £1 million in one week this month - and which is causing a considerable stink among the perfumery establishment.

When it comes to selling perfume, 36-year-old Burton is thumbing his nose at tradition by selling up-market perfumes at down-market prices through Tupperware party-style direct sell marketing. In 20 months he has revolutionized the elitist image of French perfume: he claims that his range of "designer-free" scents are produced from the same alcohols and by the same methods as those of the top Parisian parfumeurs - but they cost a fraction of the price.

Such is the success of the range that Burton had a £5

million retail turnover in his first year of business and has become Red Star's biggest customer.

Since the UK wholesale value of the entire perfume industry is almost £90 million according to recent figures, Burton would seem to have made impressive inroads into the market. "There is no difference between our product and one marketed in Harrods," Burton claims. "It isn't a cheap perfume in terms of quality."

His scents do smell remarkably similar to certain well-known brands and they have numbers instead of names. It is a marketing practice which is commonplace in America, where such products blatantly admit to being "smell-alikes". In Britain such claims would be an infringement of trademark, so the sales techniques are a little more subtle. The Jean-Pierre Sand Party Plan Manual suggests asking guests to write down the names of as many French perfumes as they can remember, then: "You've



Max Burton: "sales are getting bigger and bigger and bigger" got a list of your customers' favourite perfumes..."

Burton sells his products around the country through a self-employed workforce, which has grown from 1,000 agents in January to 35,000 today - 70 per cent of them women. The most skillful, according to Burton, can earn more than £100,000 a year.

Burton says that he has the "utmost respect" for the peo-

ple who are helping him to make his fortune. "I don't think I'm a very good salesman myself," he admits. "When I was selling textiles to Marks & Spencer I used to quiver and quake." He went into textiles after leaving the army; there was also a brief interlude working for a French charity, which he left after a disagreement over how it should be run. He eventually set up a company which

specialized in producing items for Marks & Spencer. "They wanted to produce a perfume which was very similar to expensive perfumes and they gave me that as a project."

In April last year he bought a defunct company in debt to the tune of £120,000, to sell unbranded perfume direct. "Sales are just getting bigger and bigger and bigger," Burton says. By last Christmas he had paid off the £120,000 deficit and had £300,000 in his bank account.

He no longer operates from the front room of the Georgian house in Sandwich, Kent, where he lives with his French wife and baby son, but from an office-cum-warehouse nearby.

Burton claims that his motivation is independence. "I don't personally care how much money I make - to me £99 is the right price to pay for a suit - but now I know that if you judge everybody on that basis you can make a big mistake."

Sally Brompton

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Charity begins on the phone

In my home charity began a few nights ago when I switched on LBC, the London all-news radio station, and heard that an Christmas appeal was aimed at buying a lifeboat, not along with a hummer-killer submarine and a Chinese junk, a lifeboat belongs in that small category: Boats I Have Never Owned. It still does, but it was a close-run thing.

LBC had the admirable idea of setting up a telephone line on which one listened to various people talking about lifeboats, why the Royal National Lifeboat Institution needed more of them, and so

forth and so on. You make the call at a cost of 25p a minute (off peak), of which 20p goes towards the lifeboat. How much you give depends on how long you leave the line open.

So I dialled the number and after ensuring that I had not mistakenly got Linda Leonard's Christmas message, as advertised in *Sunday Sport*, I put the receiver back on the floor where it lives and returned to an article by John Cole in *The Listener*.

Undoubtedly no blame attaches to Mr Cole; perhaps it is something they are putting in the beer. At any rate, I awoke just over an hour later with a crick in the neck and the odd

FIRST PERSON

Peter Barnard

feeling that someone was trying to communicate with me from a great distance. It was dear old Douglas Cameron of LBC, addressing me from the floor.

Any of my bankers will confirm that I am not a mean person. But at this time of year there are a lot of calls on my overdraft: you can hardly get a cheque off to a menacing Rantzen-type before a raucous

Geldof-type is threatening to read out another charity's address, once now and again at the end of the programme.

Pub bars are grunting under the weight of boxes shaped like dogs and massive bottles with few coins in them. The largesse has to be spread pretty thin; one simply can't afford a lifeboat. I reckon to have slept through a £15 call, of which the lifeboat itself will get £12. Couple of boss's whistles? Couple of pint for the wheelhouse?

At the official waking up time next morning it was good to hear Mr Cameron, no longer a recorded message, say that the £10,000 for the first lifeboat had already been

raised; I suppose that means my coat of paint goes on the wheelhouse of the second one.

Which leaves only one problem: how to write about inadvertent over-generosity without appearing to be recouping one's losses, with interest? I think I know the answer to that, but don't waste money sending me a receipt, Mr Cameron - a launch which includes a quick burst of "For Those in Peril on the Phone" will do instead.

LBC's lifeboat appeal continues until January 6. Telephone 0898 500 350. Or send a cheque, payable to the RNLI, c/o LBC, Gough Square, London EC4A 4LP.

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WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 23 1987

Executive Editor
Kenneth Fleet

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 Share
1408.9 (+3.8)
FT-SE 100
1747.4 (-2.8)
Bargains
24328 (27597)
USM (Datastream)
138.4 (+1.71)

THE POUND

US dollar
1.8300 (+0.0025)
W German mark
2.9783 (-0.0078)
Trade-weighted
75.6 (same)

Vauxhall returns to profit

Vauxhall, the British subsidiary of General Motors, has returned to profit this year after losses since 1978. GM declined to give figures but full-year results are due in February.

Vauxhall lost more than £60 million in 1976. Production of cars and vans this year improved 13 per cent to 208,000, despite a two-week strike. GM Europe will also produce a net profit after four consecutive years of heavy financial losses, the US-based group said.

The former Bedford truck operation sold to Mr David Brown, of AWD, last month has announced its first export orders. It is to supply 1,300 trucks and bus knock-down kits worth £16 million to Morocco and East Africa.

£2.2m buy-out

Ferguson Industrial Holdings, the printing, packaging, plastics and publishing group, is selling its subsidiary, British Trimmings, a manufacturer of textile trimmings, to the management for £2.2 million. The management is backed by a consortium including County NatWest Ventures and 3i in Liverpool.

Issue well met

The £90 million rights issue by Alexander Proudfoot (the former City and Foreign Holdings) was 82 per cent subscribed. The shares not taken up were sold at the market yesterday at 203p per share, 3p above the rights issue price.

SUMMARY

STOCK MARKETS

New York	1988.17 (-22.21)
Nikkei Average	22741.02 (-216.82)
Hong Kong	2278.41 (-1.72)
Amsterdam Gen	213.3 (+0.5)
Sydney AO	1287.8 (+17.1)
Frankfurt	1382.8 (+8.7)
Brussels	3542.3 (+98.5)
Paris CAC	285.1 (-2.1)
Zurich S&K Gen	428.4 (-1.8)
London	
FT-A All-Share	1408.9 (+3.8)
FT-30	1747.4 (-2.8)
FT-Gold Mines	301.1 (-4.5)
FT-Fixed Interest	94.71 (+0.02)
FT-Govt Secs	88.19 (-0.02)

Recent issues

Closing prices

Page 18

Page 22

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

RISSE:	
Tate & Lyle	780p (+22p)
Wm Collins	610p (+40p)
Henry Jones	282p (+10p)
Asprey	262p (+35p)
AB Elect	367p (+25p)
Central TV	442p (+20p)
Time Team	504p (+34p)
Woodworth	270p (+15p)
Royal Bank Scot	350p (+15p)
M & G	250p (+31p)
Shawcross	430p (+30p)
Metal Box	201p (+10p)
Cons. Gold	382p (+25p)
Blockways	350p (+25p)
Mountainview	345p (+40p)

FALLS:

Guinness	294p (-10p)
STR	452p (-17p)
Beecham	452p (-16p)
Britol	411p (-14p)
GNK	304p (-10p)

Closing prices

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Basic 8 1/4%	
3-month interbank 6 1/4% to 6 1/2%	
3-month eligible bills 6 1/4% to 6 1/2%	
buying rate	
US Prime Rate 8 1/4%	
Federal Funds 6 1/4%	
3-month Treasury Bills 5.56-5.94%	
30-year bonds 9.64-9.82%	

CURRENCIES

London	New York
£ \$1.8300	\$ £1.8300
£ DM2.9783	DM £2.9783
£ Sfr2.4211	Sfr £2.4211
£ FF10.0742	FF £10.0742
£ Yen251.40	Yen £251.40
£ Index59.2	Index £59.2
ECU 10.591795	SDR 10.591795

GOLD

London Fixing	
AM \$481.50 pm \$483.00	
close \$483.25-483.75 (\$284.00-284.50)	
New York	
Comex \$483.30-483.80	

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Jan.) pm \$16.10 (\$16.50)	
Dutch (Jan.) pm \$16.10 (\$16.50)	
30-day forward	
Bas Randam 18	Wall Street 21
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Traded Opts 18	Foreign Exch 22
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OECD urges further action

Failure 'could mean more market turmoil'

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

Renewed turbulence on the financial markets could break out unless there is further action by the leading governments to correct world economic imbalances, the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warns today.

The OECD's *Economic Outlook*, the first to be published since world stock markets plunged in October, says there is a chance of containing the effects of those falls.

"If there were now a return to calm conditions, the effects of the recent financial market developments could be limited: economic growth might only be slightly weakened for a year or two, while at the same time inflation could be lower and the major economic imbalances somewhat smaller," the OECD says.

But it warns: "In the absence of further policy changes, however, market perceptions that the adjustment of the imbalances might be insufficient over the medium term could well give rise to renewed financial and exchange market turbulence."

"Prospects for activity would then be worse; indeed, prolonged or acute financial market turmoil could even carry with it the risk of a recession accompanied by higher interest rates."

The OECD called for complementary action by the main economies, emphasizing both macroeconomic changes and

the speeding up of micro-economic reforms and trade liberalization.

On macroeconomic policy, the OECD picks out the United States and West Germany. It notes the disappointment in the financial markets over the deal to cut the US budget deficit, and says further measures are likely to be needed.

Germany's growth performance is described as unsatisfactory, and the report calls for more action by the Bonn government.

"Even taking account of the 1988 tax cuts and discounting any adverse direct effects of the stock market crisis, the German economy may continue to grow below its medium-term potential over the remainder of the 1980s," the report says.

"Additional macroeconomic policy action is necessary to achieve more satisfactory performance."

This call meets with a swift response from the German Government, which took the unusual step of issuing a statement rejecting the OECD's growth call ahead of the publication of the *Economic Outlook*.

The statement, released by the German delegation to the OECD, said Germany had already acted to boost growth, and added that: "From the German point of view, the present situation does not require further measures."

Growth in Britain is described as buoyant, and the scope for further action to boost the economy is dependent on the Government's success in bringing down wage increases.

Although the report excludes Britain from immediate action to support world economic growth, the focus on wages growth in Britain could be construed as a veiled attack on the Chancellor's plans to cut income tax further in the Budget at a time of already buoyant real income growth.

Britain's growth rate next year is put at 2.75 per cent, above the Treasury's 2.5 per cent forecast. But the current account is forecast to deteriorate, recording a deficit of more than £5 billion in 1989.

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OECD FORECASTS

	1987	1988	1989
United States			
Growth (%)	2.75	2.5	1.75
Inflation (%)	3	3.5	3.75
Current a/c	-155	-134	-105
Japan (%)			
Growth (%)	3.5	3.5	3
Inflation (%)	-0.5	0.5	1.5
Current a/c (%)	86	81	79
Germany (%)			
Growth (%)	1.5	1.5	1.25
Inflation (%)	2.5	1.75	1.75
Current a/c	44	41	32
Britain (%)			
Growth (%)	3.75	2.75	1.75
Inflation (%)	3	4.5	4.25
Current a/c	-2.75	-5.75	-8.5
Total OECD			
Growth (%)	2.75	2.25	1.75
Inflation (%)	3.25	3.5	3.5
Current a/c	-48	-50	-43

* \$bn

Japan 'set to expand'

From David Watts, Tokyo

The Japanese economy has pulled clear of the effects of the strong yen and should record real gross national product growth of 3.8 per cent next fiscal year, according to government predictions.

The Economic Planning Agency (EPA) predicts that 1988 will see the economy shift to expansion from recovery, boosted by strong private investment in plant and equipment, up by 9.8 per cent over the current year. Private consumption will keep expanding smoothly to provide a domestic growth component of 4.7 per cent, with the external element falling by 1 per cent.

In the current year, while the GNP grew by 3.7 per cent the domestic demand compo-

nent was 5 per cent and the external demand element was minus 1.3 per cent.

"Japan is quickly moving in a good direction," said Mr Makoto Kuroda, vice-minister for international trade at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. "Finally we've come to the point where the performance is visible. Clearly tangible results are coming out, as we have been saying for some time, but we haven't been given credit for it."

The vice-minister estimates that the strong yen has helped the Japanese economy to the tune of ¥15,000 billion (£64 billion), including the benefits of cheaper oil.

A survey of 130 economists shows that they concur with the government's optimistic

outlook for the economy, with an average predicted growth rate of 3.7 per cent.

The EPA estimates that domestic demand will continue its strong showing next year, with real growth of 3.8 per cent, as against a real growth rate of 3.6 per cent for the present year. In contrast, the private residential investment component of that growth will show only a 1.9 per cent increase next year, as against 16.5 per cent this year.

Industrial production is expected to record an increase of 7.6 per cent, while wholesale prices are expected to edge up by 0.3 per cent after two years of decline. The balance of trade, meanwhile, is expected to decline from a surplus of \$92 billion (£50.3 billion) in the current year to \$81 billion.

£32m WPP takeover

By Cliff Feltham

Mr Martin Sorrell's advertising and marketing group WPP has become the largest design group in the country with the takeover yesterday of Stewart McColl Associates in a deal worth up to £32.5 million.

It is the first big acquisition by WPP since it took over the world's best-known advertising agency, J Walter Thompson, in the summer.

WPP has been keen to expand into the design market, which is thought to be worth about £1.7 billion in Britain and growing at 25 per cent a year. The US market, valued at about £5 billion, has a 20 per cent growth rate.

Stewart McColl, which was set up in 1974, supplies a range of services including architecture, interior design, graphics and product design for customers which include Burton, Ratners, Ladbroke and Trafalgar House. The company is expected to make profits before tax of £850,000 in the current year on turnover of £8.5 million.

WPP is paying for the acquisition with a mixture of cash and shares, with the final amount based on the profit performance of the company but with an overall ceiling of £32.5 million.

Barclays raises \$400m

By Our Banking Correspondent

Barclays Bank announced that it had raised \$400 million (£218 million) in debt capital in the US yesterday, its second capital-raising exercise in the past six weeks.

The issue uses up half of the bank's \$800 million shelf registration lodged with the US authorities last month, and follows November's £250 million Eurosterling debt issue. Both debt issues will count as Tier 2 capital under the new rules on capital adequacy being brought in by banking authorities around the world.

The new debt carries a maturity of 30 years with an

interest rate of 10.5 per cent. Mr Brian Pierce, Barclays' finance director, said the market conditions had looked right for the issue. Interest rates appeared to have stopped falling and there were fewer other issues with which Barclays had to compete.

"We were planning this issue before the new capital convergence rules were published recently, but it certainly helps us to meet the new ratios. The Bank of England has not yet officially adopted the new rules, but when it does Barclays expects to be one of the best capitalized British banks."

Barclays has also defended the move on profit grounds. The US T-bond market is several times larger than the British gilts market - which has a daily turnover of only some £5 billion. But it has 43 primary dealers compared to 25 gilts dealers. The competition in the US market is therefore less intense and profits can more easily be made than in British government stocks.

In Tokyo four foreign firms have been licensed for securities business in Japan, bringing the total number of foreign brokerage firms operating there to 48 with 51 branches, the Finance Ministry said yesterday.

The four firms are Fidelity Investments Brokerage Service (Japan), a subsidiary of Fidelity Brokerage Service of the US, Smith New Court of Britain, Garban, a broker's brokerage unit in the US of MAI of Britain, and BNP Securities, a British affiliate of Banque National de Paris of France.

Ministry officials said this is the first time that new licences have numbered less than 10 since the ministry started semi-annual issuance of licences in 1985.



Big target: Sir Philip Shelbourne, Britoil chairman, yesterday (Photograph: John Manning)

Panel decision on BP's bid for Britoil expected today

By David Young, Energy Correspondent

An announcement on whether BP will be allowed to make a full bid for Britoil, the country's largest independent oil group and the world's biggest pure exploration company, will be made today.

The City's watchdog, the Takeover Panel, yesterday discussed the implications of the government's Golden Share in Britoil and will today announce whether BP can buy 100 per cent of the shares in Britoil. It will not, however, be assured of controlling the company.

Under the terms of the Golden Share arrangements, the Treasury would still have a say in the running of the company, as well as the right to outvote BP during board meetings. But since BP believes this right has so far not affected the running of Britoil, it is prepared to accept this position.

Britoil, whose chairman is Sir Philip Shelbourne, is supporting the move by Arco, the US oil company, to acquire up to 30 per cent of the company in the open market and then to

take the holding up to 49.9 per cent by merging the non-US assets of Arco into Britoil.

Arco now has 14.7 per cent of Britoil and Mr Lod Cooke, its chief executive, is in London discussing the issue with his financial advisers. The City expects Arco to be back in the market this week.

The Takeover Panel has been asked to rule on whether BP can make a full bid for the company while knowing it will not have ultimate voting control of the company.

Oil company stocks remain the most active sector in the market as the value of various company assets is closely scrutinized.

In contrast to the government Golden Share in Britoil,

which has played a significant part in the Britoil-BP-Arco battle, that established in Enterprise, when the Government formed the company out of the British Gas North Sea assets, has a definite life with an expiry date of next autumn.

Oil company stocks remain the most active sector in the market as the value of various company assets is closely scrutinized.

On the failure of the raid itself, one fund manager said institutions were becoming wise to dawn raids and many followed house rules advising them not to sell ahead of a bid.

Blue Circle is itself involved in a £217 million contested bid for Birmid Qualcast, the cooker, lawnmower and boiler manufacturer. This is part of a move to diversify further away from its traditional base at the heavy end of the building materials industry.

Temps, page 18

Mystery of raid at Blue Circle

By Alexandra Jackson

The fate of Britain's biggest cement manufacturer, Blue Circle Industries, hung in the balance last night after a mystery buyer failed in an attempt to snatch more than 38 million shares in the company at a cost of £175 million.

Instead, the dawn raider, represented by James Capel, the securities house, is thought to have walked away with a mere 2 million shares, less than 1 per cent of the equity, having offered 450p for Blue Circle's shares, 35 per cent above Monday's closing price of 333p.

There was speculation as to the identity of the raider, although all agreed it had to be a group of some size, as Blue Circle's market capitalization rose to £1.2 billion after yesterday's activity.

An early favourite was the world's largest cement manufacturer, the Swiss company Holderbank. But M Claude Rosset, Holderbank's treasurer, "categorically denied" the group's involvement and said it was not intending to expand in Britain.

Hanson, an already well-established brick manufacturer, BTR, the thwarted suitor for glassmaker Pilkington, and Hutchison Whampoa, linked to Green Island Cement, the Far East cement manufacturer, were all discussed. Mr John Pattison, a Hanson director, issued the stock reply: "We never comment on market rumours."

Other favourites included Lafarge, the French building materials giant, Ciments Français and Norcem, the Scandinavian cement group. However, Mr David Poole, the chief executive of Blue Circle said he would be surprised if the raider was another European cement manufacturer. But apart from this, he said: "I have no idea who it is."

Further afield, Mr John Spalwyn's Adelaide Steamship, which built up and then sold a disensible stake in Blue Circle earlier this year, was thought by some to have returned, while other Antipodean corporations, keen to expand in Europe, Boral, CSR and Mr Larry Adler's FAI Group, were also mentioned.

On the failure of the raid itself, one fund manager said institutions were becoming wise to dawn raids and many followed house rules advising them not to sell ahead of a bid.

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1929 vs 1987

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TT 22/87

US Congress passes bill to cut budget deficit by \$76bn

The United States Congress passed two key bills early yesterday to finance the government and honour a deal with President Reagan to cut the federal budget and supply Nicaraguan Contra rebels.

The delicate budget package for fiscal 1988 was hammered out during a marathon session which began on Monday and went on until almost 4am yesterday.

The two bills will fund the US government until the end of September, cut the budget deficit by \$76 billion (\$41.5 million) over two years and also give \$8.1 million in new aid to the Nicaraguan rebels.

The House of Representatives and the Senate — both under Democratic control — passed a bill to raise taxes and cut spending and a companion \$600 billion bill to finance the government.

President Reagan is expected to sign the bills into law. He had repeatedly threatened to veto the package unless it included aid for the Contras.

Technically the federal administration ran out of money to operate the government at midnight last night. The President must sign the two bills, especially the \$600 billion financing bill, to avoid a shutdown of non-essential government services.

Congress planned to adjourn later yesterday for the year and legislators will return for another session on January 25, soon after which the President will deliver his annual State of the Union message.

The House of Representatives passed the \$600 billion financing bill by a single vote — 209 to 208 — as liberal Democrats strongly opposed money for food, clothing and shelter for the Contras and continued air drops of earlier-

From Mohsin Ali, Washington

authorized but undelivered weapons.

That bill to fund the government passed the Senate by 59 to 30 votes after legislators deleted a rule requiring broadcasters to give equal time to all sides on controversial issues.

The President had said that he would veto the bill if it included the so-called "fairness doctrine" for broadcasters.

On a vote of 237 to 181, the House of Representatives approved a \$17.6 billion cut in the deficit in 1988, \$9 billion coming from new taxes and the rest from spending cuts. The measure was sent to the Senate for action where it passed by 61 to 28.

That bill and provisions of the \$600 billion finance bill would implement a deal worked out after the October stock market crash with President Reagan to cut the budget deficit by at least \$30.2 billion

in 1988, and by another \$46 billion in 1989.

The first deficit-reduction measure would provide about half of the deficit reduction in both packages, \$9 billion of it in higher taxes mainly affecting wealthy individuals and corporations and the remainder from asset sales and spending reductions in permanent federal programmes such as farm subsidies and Medicare.

The second package, the \$600 billion omnibus appropriations bill, includes cuts in military spending by \$5 billion and discretionary domestic programmes by \$2.6 billion. It funds most government operations until the end of September 1988.

The bill would leave military spending authority at about \$292 billion, almost the same level as in the last fiscal year. But it continues for the third year the reduction in the

Reagan Administration's military build-up.

Among policy items in the bill are a continuation of funding for the Mideastern peace process, the sale of Soviet anti-aircraft missiles to Bahrain and a resumption of foreign aid to Pakistan.

In a surprise action, Congress pushed through an important housing bill during Monday night to extend permanently the authority of the Federal Housing Administration to guarantee home mortgage loans.

Meanwhile, the Treasury Department announced the budget deficit was \$25.77 billion in November, the second month of the fiscal 1988 government year, down from \$30.74 billion in October.

The department said that the deficit for the current fiscal year, which began on October 1, totals \$56.51 billion.

COMMENT

Gloom from Paris on more Black Mondays

Should there be a second wave to the crash of 1987, which presumably would turn it into the crash of 1987-88, there will be no shortage of people around to say "I told you so".

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Paris-based club for the industrialized countries, yesterday appended a "must do more" recommendation to the actions by the major governments since the markets plunged in October.

When economists start predicting the next financial crash, there is always the temptation to ask why they did not tell us that the last one was coming. But to be fair to the OECD, it has been warning about world economic imbalances for quite some time. And while no-one could predict exactly how the effects of these would make themselves felt, come to roost they did — on Black Monday.

economic performance to back them up. "There is a limit to how far it is feasible or desirable for currencies to be held at any particular level by means of intervention and monetary policy changes alone," it says.

This, clearly, is where the Louvre Accord of February went wrong. Countries failed to deliver enough action on policy to support a stable framework of currencies. And when this is the case, the OECD says, attempts to hold exchange rates at levels inconsistent with the fundamentals will lead to difficulties. This is the point that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his "poppycock" dismissal of criticisms of the Louvre Accord, failed to take on board. And it is one which suggests that any attempt to create a Louvre II agreement on the basis of the policy changes since Black Monday will be running serious risks.

Every OECD *Economic Outlook* has its elements of local interest. In this case, it is the absolving of Britain from any responsibility to boost growth further in the wider world interest. This cannot, unfortunately, be taken as outright approval for British policy.

The sting in the tail is that the growth of wages in Britain is out of line with other countries, the OECD says, and any further action to boost the economy could push it even further out of line. This view on Britain would have been fully discussed at the OECD's economic policy committee earlier this month, attended by Sir Peter Middleton, the Treasury Permanent Secretary and Sir Terence Burns, the chief economic adviser. It helps explain why senior Treasury officials are said to be urging Budget caution on the Chancellor to an even greater extent than usual.

The OECD's call for additional fiscal policy action by West Germany, and Bonn's ungentlemanly rejection of this advice even before it was officially published, has already overshadowed the Group of Seven's planned Christmas message to the markets. The G7 statement, which yesterday was still awaiting President Reagan's perusal of the final budget document from Congress, was in any case an ill-conceived idea.

The OECD report warns against future attempts to hold exchange rates without the changes in underlying

Lord King pays the cost

The British Caledonian board has played a remarkable poker game with a poor hand. For that, other shareholders should undoubtedly thank Lawrence Tindale, 31's experienced deputy chairman. The idea of a deal with SAS had seemed like a desperate last throw. After all, B-Cal had been a forced seller to Lord King's British Airways in the first place and looked even weaker after the Monopolies Commission report.

It would hardly have been possible to play the SAS card had BA not turned the screw so far in cutting its cash alternative bid from £220 million to £119 million, albeit that simply reflected the arithmetic of the stock market crash. Once SAS presented a credible alternative, the bargaining position reversed. B-Cal was always assumed to be worth more to BA than to any other airline. It was worth even more to Lord King to keep SAS out.

not counting the aircraft orders to which B-Cal is to some degree committed. BA shareholders have certainly paid heavily to keep the Scandinavians out. Yet it is hard to see them complaining too bitterly. For BA, the deal always had commercial logic far beyond its instinct to maintain and increase its relative size and monopoly power.

The combined operation should be able to shed more than £40 million a year of costs — £70 million according to Phillips & Drew. BA also gains the important routes from London to Saudi Arabia, to West Africa and to Dallas and Atlanta. By contrast, the routes BA will have to give up are unimportant and may on balance save money.

As treatment of the Laker payments demonstrated, Lord King is a past master of using legitimate accounting techniques to best advantage. B-Cal's October year-end should give plenty of scope for write-offs and minimize any dilution to earnings next year — at least above the line.

Lord King faces one further serious problem. His balance sheet will lose its healthy appearance given the big aircraft replacement programme and the unexpected extra payment. If all commitments were maintained, gearing could rapidly rise to 150 per cent on BZW's calculations. No doubt the orders will be changed radically. But BA's balance sheet might well need beefing up unless there is an unlikely bumper year of trading in store.

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Former US Treasury chief bargains for Ariadne stake

Sydney (AP-Dow Jones) — Mr William Simon, the former United States Treasury Secretary, is negotiating to buy a stake in Ariadne, an Australian investment company.

Ariadne was one of Australia's fastest-growing companies before the stock market crash in October.

It has interests in property, financial services and industry and, until recently, controlled a mining concern.

Mr Simon is a non-executive director of Ariadne and heads its US financial services division, which comprises International Merchant Bank Services, a joint-venture investment bank controlling three savings-and-loan associations in California and Hawaii.

Mr Simon was not prepared to comment on the talks to buy a stake in Ariadne until the matter was finalized.

Mr Judge yesterday said Mr Simon was interested in Ariadne shares "should clearly indicate that Ariadne has been very much undervalued in the current market".

Judge Corporation, a New Zealand investment company linked with Mr Judge, is trying to sell the Ariadne shares because it, too, was hit hard by the collapse in the stock market and is selling assets to reduce debt.

Ariadne shares fell a further 3 cents yesterday to 40 cents. Their year's peak was Aus\$4.

On Monday, Mr Harunori Takahashi, president of EIE Development of Japan, and Mr Kerry Packer, chairman of Consolidated Press Holdings of Australia, withdrew from a conditional agreement, entered in November, to buy the 18.7 per cent stake in Ariadne from Judge Corporation for Aus\$93.4 million (£36.2 million).

Their joint-venture company, Oxted, did not disclose a reason for ending the agreement.

Mr Judge yesterday said the investment group led by Mr Simon had offered Oxted participation in the 18.7 per cent Ariadne stake being negotiated.

Oxted is reported to be mainly interested in Ariadne's property assets, while the Simon group appears mostly interested in the United States savings and loans associations.

Midland and HK Bank swap directors

By Richard Thomson, Banking Correspondent

The agreement by which Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation is taking a 14.9 per cent stake in Midland Bank was completed yesterday.

Midland is receiving a capital injection of a minimum of £383 million arising from the deal.

Mr William Purves, chairman of Hongkong & Shanghai, and Mr Kenneth Barker, head of its London office, were appointed non-executive directors of Midland while Sir Kit McMahon, chairman of Midland, will become a non-executive director of the Hong Kong bank.

The initial agreement is for an exchange of certain overseas operations between the two banks to rationalize and improve their business.

There is also a clause preventing Hongkong & Shanghai from increasing its stake in Midland for three years without Midland's consent.

It is widely believed, however, that the agreement will eventually lead to a full merger between the banks as part of a strategy by Hongkong & Shanghai to move out of the Crown colony before the Chinese take over in 1997.

Elf rejects debt review

Paris (Reuters) — Elf-Aquitaine, the French oil group which is bidding for Tiscot, said it had rejected the reasons given on Monday by Moody's Investors Services for a review of its debt.

Elf said that a takeover bid by Sanofi, its pharmaceutical subsidiary, for AH Robins of the US would not have a negative effect on Elf's finances.

An Elf spokesman said: "We reject the idea that Sanofi's bid for AH Robins could affect Elf's finances."

Earnings fall by 45.5% at Mazda

Tokyo (AP-Dow Jones) — Net earnings at the Mazda Motor Corporation fell 45.5 per cent in the year ended October 31, the company said yesterday.

It totalled ¥4.43 billion (£19.12 million), down from ¥8.145 billion in the previous year. Earnings per share fell to ¥4.63 from ¥8.55.

Sales totalled ¥1,602 billion, down 1.5 per cent from ¥1,626 billion.

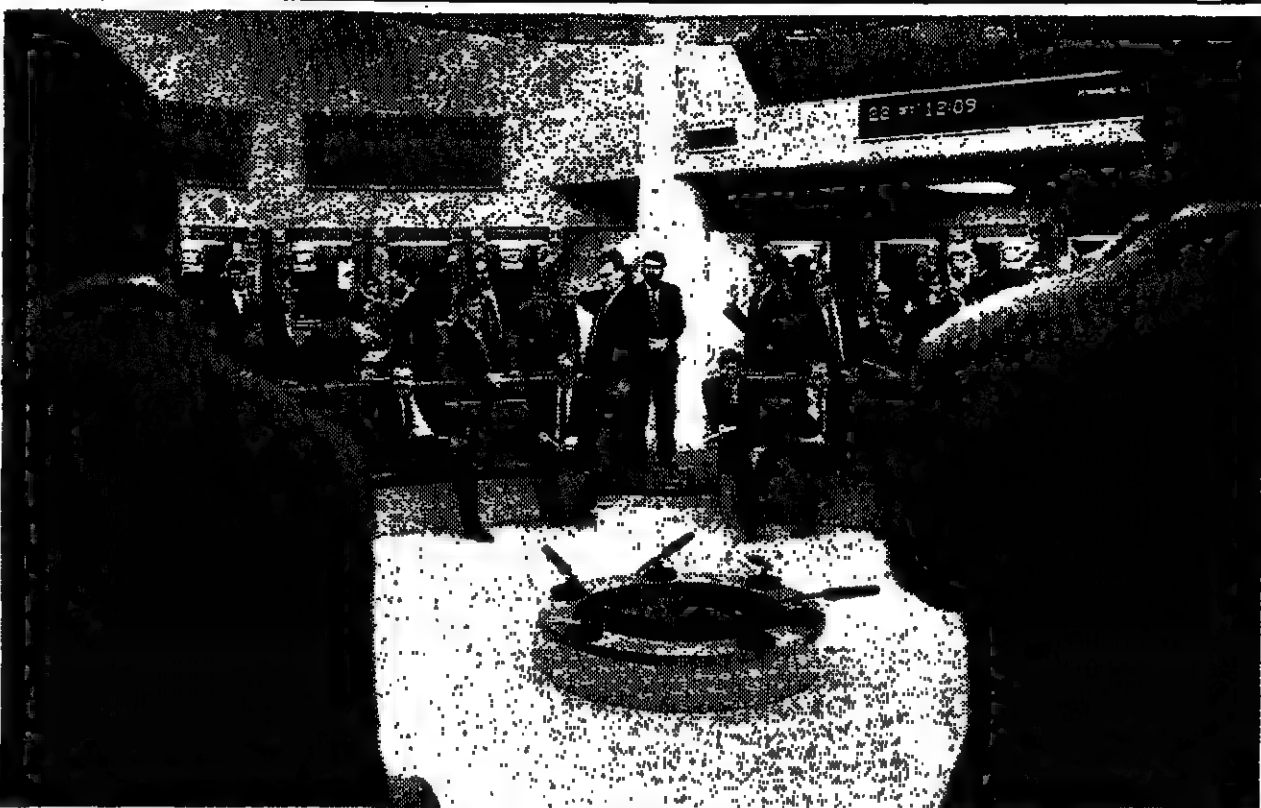
Despite the sluggish business performance, Mazda plans to pay a ¥7.50 full-year dividend, unchanged from the previous year.

Mazda officials blamed the earnings decline largely on the company's heavy reliance on exports, which accounted for about 70 per cent of its overall business in the year.

As in recent years, they said, the yen's continued strength made Mazda vehicles less competitive in overseas markets by driving up their prices and thus restraining sales.

During the year, car sales totalled ¥941.25 billion, up 1.1 per cent from the previous year, while commercial vehicle sales tumbled 11.6 per cent to ¥283.521 billion.

Car sales surged 14.4 per cent in volume terms to 1.02 million vehicles, while commercial vehicle sales totalled 459,263 units, down 9.6 per cent. Mazda did not make projections on either sales or net earnings for the current year.



Copper higher: dealings on the London Metal Exchange floor yesterday (Picture by James Morgan)

Record prices in surging copper market

Copper hit an all-time high on the London Metal Exchange yesterday, confirming its present status as the most buoyant of the base metals, as the prospect of continued short supply maintained upward momentum.

Grade "A" cash metal firmed to £1,702 per tonne in the morning, adding £7 to the previous high on Monday morning, after surging by more than £77 since Friday's close.

Three-month copper also edged up in nervous trading to a record £1,428 per tonne, up £6 on Monday's top figure.

Mr Christopher Green, LME chairman, said there was a genuine tightness in physical supplies of copper. He added: "This seems unlikely to be alleviated in the short term."

Pericom earnings fall on sterling strength

By Alison Keeble

Pretax profits at Pericom, the Milton Keynes computer manufacturer and maintenance group, fell to £610,000 in the year to the end of September from £1.85 million the previous year.

Turnover of £16.76 million was maintained.

Mr Ron Cragg, chairman, said: "Adverse trading conditions in British manufacturing activity have been aggravated by the strengthening of sterling, making exports difficult and allowing our US-based competitors to reduce prices."

Pericom established a subsidiary in Singapore last May in an attempt to alleviate the effect of the falling dollar and reduce production cost.

The company is passing the final dividend to conserve cash. It paid an interim dividend of 1.0p against a total last year of 2.5p.

British Vita buys Uniroyal Royalite

By Cliff Feltham

British Vita, the polymers and fibres group, is paying £103 million for Uniroyal Royalite Group, one of the leading European manufacturers of thermoplastic sheeting used in a wide range of industries.

The businesses being acquired, Royalite Plastics of Newbridge, Lothian and Uniroyal Plastics of Milan, Italy, are expected to make profits of about £1 million after tax on sales of £15 million in the current year.

Mr Frank Eaton, a director of British Vita, said the acquisition was another big move forward for the group in the European polymer compounding and manufacturing sector.

Mr Rod Sellers, a British Vita director, commented that the deal gave them "a major presence in engineered thermal plastics."

Spirit of Christmas past?

Richmond-upon-Thames' Victorian Evening has become something of a Christmas crowd-puller up the river, with the busy streets closed for late-night shopping, traffic diverted to allow stalls to be set up, local policemen and shop staff topped up in Victorian dress, and horse-drawn buses meandering through the throng. The town's shops are asked to contribute to the considerable organization of the event, and all who stay open late into the evening must surely benefit from the massive crowds drawn there. But the spirit of Christmas bypassed some this year. David Nagli, president of Richmond's Chamber of Commerce, who organized the charity event, named names this week in the *Richmond and Twickenham Times*. A Merry Christmas, then, to all those who contributed — WH Smith, Boots, Marks and Spencer, Dickins & Jones, the Royal Bank of Scotland, Laura Ashley, Superdrug, Dixons, Peter Lord, Our Price, Lloyds Bank, Barclays Bank, Mothercare, Currys and many more. And Bah! Humbug! to the high street Scrooges who refused to chip in towards financing the evening, but still opened their doors to lure in the wandering Victorian crowds — Dorothy Perkins, Next, Raters, Gap, and Top Shop, among others. Biggest names among the Scrooges listed by Nagli were Sainsbury and Burton. Sir John, Sir Ralph... how could you?

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Animal crackers

Have you become a victim of post-crash retrenchment in the City? Are you looking for a new job? Do you have no skills apart from the ability to talk the hind legs off a donkey? Try moving to California, where I hear the latest craze is to take your anguished pet to visit a pet psychic. Pet psychics seem to reach parts that vets cannot reach, like finding out whether Fido might like a brother or sister, whether Pussy enjoys the pressure of cat shows or whether she yearns to settle down with Tom and have a few kittens. Consultations are \$40 to \$60 an hour, roughly the same as you might charge as a dealing commission on a small trade, but with the advantage that you can work from home. Apparently you can even minister over the telephone in a crisis.

tancy firm Touche Ross. Most who responded to Touche's questionnaire thought high ethical standards boosted a company's competitive edge. Fifteen per cent thought US business was highly ethical, with more than four-fifths of those polled rating America as reasonably ethical. This was enough to push England into second place in the business ethics league, followed by Canada, Switzerland and West Germany. Trouble is, the survey was only sent to business people in the US, and some might regard the results as the market researcher's equivalent of insider dealing.

Ethics go west

If you want ethics with your business, head west. Business people reckon America enjoys the world's highest standards of business ethics, according to a new survey by account-



Morgan Grenfell points out that it made 14 members of its staff redundant and not 25 as stated in yesterday's City Diary. Apologies, especially to Mr Fred Taylor, incorrectly listed as one of them.

Speaking in tongues

During the bid battle for B-Cal, a lot was said and written about the thoughts of the SAS president, Jan Carlzon, on the need for cross-border tie-ups between airlines in a fast deregulating world. Scandinavians have been practising what they preach since 1946, when Sweden, Denmark and Norway got SAS off the ground as a joint carrier. But there are problems. Take language, for one. A call to Carlzon's HQ in Stockholm the other day produced a Swedish telephonist, who put me through to a Danish secretary, who re-routed the call to a Norwegian press spokesman. All spoke in their native tongues, with no attempt at "Scandinavian", that haphazard linguistic compromise between the common elements of the Nordic languages. To the outsider, they sounded the same, or equally unintelligible, but are often far apart. The Swedish word for *funny, amusing*, for instance, is the same as the Danish word for *peaceful, calm*. So what if Carlzon were to compliment BA's Lord King for calm negotiating skills. Not that SAS is a tower of Babel in exchange between aircraft and traffic control, they use only English — thank goodness.

• "We finally understand supply-side economics," says Fred Bergsten of Washington's Institute for International Economics. "Foreigners must supply most of the goods and all of the money."

Joe Joseph

BASE LENDING RATES

ABN & Company	8.50%
Adams & Company	8.50%
BCCI	8.50%
Consolidated Crds	8.50%
Co-operative Bank	8.50%
C. Hoare & Co	8.50%
Hong Kong & Shanghai	8.50%
Lloyds Bank	8.50%
Nat Westminster	8.50%
Royal Bank of Scotland	8.50%
TSB	8.50%
Citibank NA	8.50%

Notice to Royal Bank of Scotland Eurocheque Cardholders

With effect from 1 January 1988, the commission charge of 1.6% on each Royal Bank of Scotland eurocheque used abroad is subject to a minimum charge of approximately 80 pence. Full details are available on request at any of our branches.

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc

Registered Office: 36 St Andrews Square, Edinburgh EH2 2JZ.

If you are a holder of interim rights in respect of ordinary shares of 25p each in The British Petroleum Company p.l.c. and are in any doubt about the Share Purchase Arrangements set out in this Notice or about factors (including the market price, the effect thereon of the closing of the arrangements detailed below and the costs of dealing in the market) which you should take into account in deciding whether or not to participate in these arrangements, you should consult your stockbroker, bank manager, solicitor, accountant or other professional adviser.

SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS

by the

BANK OF ENGLAND

in relation to

interim rights in respect of

ordinary shares of 25p each in

The British Petroleum Company p.l.c.

at 70p per share

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 29th October, 1987 that arrangements had been made under which the Bank of England would stand ready to purchase partly-paid BP shares at a price of 70p per share.

The Bank of England undertakes under these arrangements (the "Share Purchase Arrangements") to purchase, on the terms and subject to the conditions set out below, interim rights ("Partly-Paid Shares") being rights (and related obligations) to acquire from The Lords Commissioners of HM Treasury ordinary shares of 25p each in The British Petroleum Company p.l.c. ("BP") as described in the prospectus dated 15th October, 1987 containing listing particulars in relation to BP.

The Share Purchase Arrangements are open to holders of Partly-Paid Shares whether acquired under the offers described in that prospectus (the "Offers") or pursuant to the underwriting of the Offers or otherwise.

**THE SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS WILL CLOSE AT 3.00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, 6th JANUARY, 1988.**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration

The consideration for each Partly-Paid Share in respect of which a valid acceptance of the Share Purchase Arrangements is received by the Bank of England is 70p free of stamp duty and stamp duty reserve tax in the United Kingdom.

Partly-Paid Shares will be acquired by the Bank of England free from all liens, charges and encumbrances and together with all rights now or hereafter attaching thereto including the right to receive all dividends and other distributions declared, made or paid after the date hereof.

Closing Date

THE SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS WILL CLOSE AT 3.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 6th JANUARY, 1988.

Procedure for Acceptance

All acceptances of the Share Purchase Arrangements must be made on the form of acceptance provided (the "Form of Acceptance"), which constitutes part of the terms of the Share Purchase Arrangements, and must be accompanied by a BP Share Offer—Letter of Acceptance ("RLA"), or more than one RLA, in either case representing the precise number of shares to be sold. Each RLA must be duly renounced by completion of Form X on the RLA or have Form X marked "Original duly renounced" by the Receiving Bank in accordance with the provisions of the RLA. The Bank of England reserves the right to treat acceptances as valid even though not complete in all respects.

An acceptance will become binding upon receipt of the Form of Acceptance by the Bank of England and may not be subsequently withdrawn.

A holder of Partly-Paid Shares who wishes to accept the Share Purchase Arrangements in respect of some only of the Partly-Paid Shares represented by an RLA must first obtain separate documents in accordance with the instructions in Paragraph 5 of the RLA.

If the Form of Acceptance and/or Form X on the relative RLA(s) is/are signed by some person on behalf of the person(s) entitled thereto, the power of attorney or other authority pursuant to which it is/they are signed must be enclosed with the Form of Acceptance.

Delivery of Forms of Acceptance

Forms of Acceptance and accompanying documents must be delivered not later than 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 6th January, 1988—

by post to—

The Manager, Chief Cashier's Office,
Bank of England, Threadneedle Street,
London EC2R 8AH

or by hand, in an envelope addressed to The Manager, Chief Cashier's Office, Bank of England, to any of the following—

Bank of England:

Head Office—
The Manager,
Chief Cashier's Office,
Bank of England,
Threadneedle Street,
London EC2R 8AH

Branches—

55 Temple Row,
Birmingham B2 6SY
Wine Street,
Bristol BS99 7AH
King Street,
Leeds LS1 1HT

Faulkner Street,
Manchester M60 2HP
Pilgrim Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 9ZLE

National Westminster Bank PLC:

any branch in England, Wales, the Channel Islands or
the Isle of Man

Bank of Scotland:

any branch in Scotland

Ulster Bank Limited:

any branch in Northern Ireland

Further copies of this Notice (including the Form of Acceptance) will be available at any of the above locations.

All documents sent by acceptors under the Share Purchase Arrangements will be sent at the risk of the person(s) entitled thereto.

Renounced RLAs are bearer documents and acceptors may therefore wish to consider using registered post. Receipt of documents will not be acknowledged.

Settlement

A cheque in favour of the acceptor(s) in respect of the consideration due under a valid acceptance will be despatched to the person completing the Form of Acceptance or, if more than one, to the person named in Box A of the Form of Acceptance (or as may be directed in the Form of Acceptance) not later than 21 days following receipt thereof by the Bank of England. Cheques will be despatched at the risk of the person(s) entitled thereto.

Overseas Holders

No person receiving a copy of this Notice or a Form of Acceptance in any territory other than the United Kingdom may treat the same as constituting an invitation or offer to him, nor should he in any event use such Form unless, in the relevant territory, such an invitation or offer could lawfully be made to him and such Form could lawfully be used without contravention of any registration or other legal requirements. Any person outside the United Kingdom wishing to accept the Share Purchase Arrangements must satisfy himself as to full observance of the laws of any relevant territory in connection therewith, including the obtaining of requisite governmental or other consents, observing any other requisite formalities and paying any transfer or other taxes due in such territory.

Authorities

Each acceptor of the Share Purchase Arrangements who executes a Form of Acceptance irrevocably undertakes, authorises, represents, warrants and agrees—

- that the execution of the Form of Acceptance constitutes the irrevocable appointment (by way of security for the acceptor's contractual obligations under the Share Purchase Arrangements) of any authorised officer of the Bank of England as such acceptor's attorney and an irrevocable instruction and authority to the attorney to execute all such further documents and give any further assurances as may be required and to do all such acts and things as may in the opinion of the attorney be necessary or expedient for the purpose of or in connection with the acceptance of the Share Purchase Arrangements and to vest in the Bank of England or its nominee the Partly-Paid Shares the subject of such Form of Acceptance; and
- to satisfy each and every act or thing which may be done or effected by any such attorney in exercise of any of his powers and/or authorities hereunder.

Governing Law and Submission to Jurisdiction

The Share Purchase Arrangements and the contracts constituted by any acceptances of the Share Purchase Arrangements will be governed by and construed in accordance with English law. By acceptance of the Share Purchase Arrangements, an acceptor submits to the jurisdiction of the English Courts.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Loss of Share Bonus

If a holder of Partly-Paid Shares acquired under the Offers sells any shares under the Share Purchase Arrangements, he will lose any entitlement which he may have to the share bonus under the Offers in respect of those shares (whether or not more shares are acquired later).

Undertakings by the Bank of England

The Bank of England will not dispose of any Partly-Paid Shares acquired under the Share Purchase Arrangements at any time prior to 30th April, 1988 except that the Bank of England may dispose of Partly-Paid Shares at any time after the closing of the Share Purchase Arrangements at a price in excess of 120p per share. In addition, if the Bank of England acquires Partly-Paid Shares which, when taken with any shares in BP held by or on behalf of HM Government, confer voting rights representing 30 per cent. or more of the votes exercisable at general meetings of BP, it will not exercise voting rights on any resolution which (when taken with any voting rights exercised by or on behalf of HM Government) represent in excess of 29.9 per cent. of the total number of votes exercisable on such resolution (adjusted to exclude votes which the Bank of England has undertaken not to exercise).

Stamp Duty Reserve Tax

The Bank of England will account to the Inland Revenue for stamp duty reserve tax on all valid acceptances of the Share Purchase Arrangements. In particular, qualified dealers (whether members of The International Stock Exchange or not) should note that, exceptionally, they need not account for stamp duty reserve tax on such acceptances.

BANK OF ENGLAND
LONDON
21st DECEMBER, 1987

BEFORE DECIDING WHETHER TO SELL YOUR PARTLY-PAID SHARES BY ACCEPTING THESE SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS, YOU SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE MARKET PRICE OF THE PARTLY-PAID SHARES, THE EFFECT THEREON OF THE CLOSING OF SUCH ARRANGEMENTS AND THE COSTS OF DEALING IN PARTLY-PAID SHARES IN THE MARKET.

IF YOU ARE IN ANY DOUBT AS TO THE ACTION YOU SHOULD TAKE IN RELATION TO THE SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS, YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR PROFESSIONAL ADVISER.

Share Purchase Arrangements by the Bank of England relating to Partly-Paid Shares in BP

FORM OF ACCEPTANCE

To accept the Share Purchase Arrangements you should complete Boxes A, B and F below and sign Box C. Joint acceptors should also complete and sign Box D. You should then send this Form with the relevant BP Share Offer—Letter of Acceptance ("RLA") or RLAs to the Bank of England, National Westminster Bank PLC, Bank of Scotland or Ulster Bank Limited in accordance with the instructions set out under "Delivery of Forms of Acceptance".

To: The Governor and Company of the Bank of England

Box A PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ma or title	Forename(s) in Full	Surname
FULL POSTAL ADDRESS—		
Post Town	County	Postcode

1. I/We, the undersigned, hereby accept, on the terms and subject to the conditions set out in the Notice of the Share Purchase Arrangements issued by the Bank of England on 21st December, 1987 ("the Notice"), the Share Purchase Arrangements in respect of

Box B Partly-Paid Shares.

Note: Insert in Box B the number of Partly-Paid Shares for which you wish to accept the Share Purchase Arrangements. If Box B is not completed or contains a number which is greater than the number of Partly-Paid Shares represented by the RLA(s) enclosed with this Form, this acceptance will be deemed to apply to the number of Partly-Paid Shares represented by each RLA(s).

2. I/We enclose the RLA(s) in respect of my/our Partly-Paid Shares to which this Form relates.

Box C I HEREBY ACCEPT THE SHARE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPECT OF THE PARTLY-PAID SHARES SET OUT (OR DEEMED TO BE SET OUT) IN BOX B ABOVE.

Signature	Date
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Corporations should complete under seal.

Box D JOINT ACCEPTORS
PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

The first acceptor should complete Boxes A, B and F and sign Box C. Insert below the names of the other joint acceptor(s), who must sign in the right hand column to accept the Share Purchase Arrangements. Corporations should accept under seal.

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ma or title	Forename(s) in Full	Surname	Signature
2nd joint acceptor			<input type="text"/>
3rd joint acceptor			<input type="text"/>
4th joint acceptor			<input type="text"/>

Box E

If you wish the consideration payable to the person named in Box A to be despatched to any other person then insert in BLOCK CAPITALS the full name and address of that person in this Box and in Box F.

Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ma or title	Forename(s) in Full	Surname
FULL POSTAL ADDRESS—		
Post Town	County	Postcode

Note: If Box E is not completed, the consideration will be sent to the acceptor named in Box A at the address set out in that Box.

ADDRESS LABEL

This portion of the form may be used as an address label for the despatch of the payment; the name and full postal address quoted in Box A or, if completed, Box E above should therefore be inserted CLEARLY in Box F below.

Box F

Name
Address
Postcode

IMPORTANT

Please enclose your RLA(s).

Please ensure that Form X of each RLA has been duly completed and that all parts (Forms X, Y and Z) are enclosed.

Before submitting the Form of Acceptance to the Bank of England, the acceptor is advised to retain a note of the number(s) of the accompanying RLA(s).

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FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
New York	1.8295-1.8330	1.8295-1.8305	0.10-0.07	0.45-0.40
Minors	2.3954-2.3985	2.3952-2.3980	0.08-1.19	0.08-0.14
Amsterdam	3.6516-3.6538	3.6519-3.6562	1.05-1.19	5W-3W
Brussels	1.1225-1.1235	1.1225-1.1235	0.12-0.15	0.12-0.15
Copenhagen	11.4173-11.5294	11.4185-11.5294	1W-11W	1-1W
Dublin	1.1235-1.1274	1.1235-1.1240	6W-1W	16W-1W
Frankfurt	1.0745-1.0755	1.0745-1.0755	1-1W	1-1W
London	2.4228-2.4247	2.4221-2.4244	121-205W	140-183W
Lisbon	2.9139-2.9174	2.9139-2.9144	25-33W	28-33W
Madrid	2.9139-2.9174	2.9139-2.9144	1-1W	1-1W
Osaka	11.6221-11.7045	11.6225-11.6232	5W-16W	16W-15W
Paris	10.9588-10.1044	10.9588-10.0681	1W-11W	1W-11W
Porto	10.9453-10.970	10.9465-10.9704	1-1W	1-1W
Seoul	281.84-281.24	281.71-282.20	1-1W	1-1W
Tokyo	20.94-21.02	20.96-20.98	1-1W	1-1W
Vietnam	20.94-21.02	20.96-20.98	1-1W	1-1W

OTHER STERLING RATES	
Argentina austral*	4.2493-4.5294
Australian dollar	2.5628-2.5638
Bahian dollar	1.0075-0.0108
Bahian dollar	1.0075-0.0108
Cyprus pound	1.0090-0.0118
Finland markka	1.2500-0.0120
French franc	6.55-6.56
Hong Kong dollar	14.2270-14.2437
India rupee	12.27-12.2737
Japanese yen	160-160.00
Malaysia dollar	4.50-4.5033
Mexico peso	10.1590-14.73
Netherlands dollar	10.1590-14.73
Saudi Arabia riyal	6.6330-0.0147
Singapore dollar	1.6337-1.6359
South African rand	1.6337-1.6359
S.Africa rand (cont.)	1.6337-1.6359
S.A. E. draham	3.5645-0.7325

MONEY MARKETS

DOLLAR SPOT RATES			
Ireland	1.8275-1.8295	Denmark	6.2900-6.2850
Singapore	1.5980-2.0000	W Germany	1.8390-1.8318
	4.4985-2.4585	Switzerland	1.3335-1.3385
Australia	0.7125-0.7135	Netherlands	1.8245-1.8200
Canada	1.3050-1.3100	France	6.5160-6.5300
	5.5000-5.5050	Japan	192.75-192.85
Norway	6.3775-6.3825		
		Rates supplied by Barclays Bank HOFEX and Ecol	

MONEY MARKETS			
Base Rates % Clearing Banks 6% Finance Hse 6%			
Overnight Market Rates %			
Overnight High 6% Low 5 Weeks Fixed 3%			
Treasury Bills (Discount %)			
Buyers 3 mth - 6%	3 mth - 6%		
Sellers 3 mth - 6%	3 mth - 6%		
Prime Bank Bills (Discount %)			
1 mth 6%+1/4	2 mth 6%+1/2	3 mth 6%+1/2	6 mth 6%+1/4
Tender Bills (Discount %)			
1 mth 6%	2 mth 6%+1/2	3 mth 6%+1/2	
Local Authority Deposits (%)			
1 week 6%+1/4	1 mth 6%+1/4	3 mth 6%+1/4	6 mth 6%+1/4
1 week 6%+1/4	3 mth 6%+1/4	12 mth 6%+1/4	
Local Authority Deposits (%)			
1 mth 6%+1/4	3 mth 6%+1/4	6 mth 6%+1/4	12 mth 6%+1/4
Local Authority Bonds (%)			
1 mth 6%+1/4	3 mth 6%+1/4	6 mth 6%+1/4	12 mth 6%+1/4
Sterling CDs (%)			
1 mth 6%+1/4	3 mth 6%+1/4	6 mth 6%+1/4	12 mth 6%+1/4

EURO MONEY DEPOSITS %			
Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth
	6 1/4-6 1/2	6 1/4-6 1/2	7 1/4-6 1/2
Call 6%+1/4			
Deutschmarks	6%+1/4	6%+1/4	6%+1/4
Call 6%+1/4			
French Francs	6%+1/4	6%+1/4	6%+1/4
Call 6%+1/4			
Swiss Francs	6%+1/4	6%+1/4	6%+1/4
Call 6%+1/4			
Yen	6%+1/4	6%+1/4	6%+1/4
Call 6%+1/4			

Fixed Rate Sterling Export Finance. Make-up order November 30, 1987. Agreed rates December 26, 1987 to January 25, 1988. Schemes 1: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 2: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 3: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 4: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 5: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 6: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 7: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 8: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 9: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 10: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 11: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 12: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 13: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 14: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 15: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 16: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 17: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 18: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 19: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 20: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 21: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 22: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 23: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 24: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 25: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 26: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 27: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 28: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 29: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 30: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 31: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 32: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 33: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 34: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 35: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 36: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 37: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 38: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 39: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 40: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 41: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 42: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 43: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 44: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 45: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 46: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 47: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 48: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 49: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 50: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 51: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 52: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 53: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 54: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 55: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 56: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 57: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 58: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 59: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 60: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 61: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 62: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 63: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 64: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 65: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 66: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 67: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 68: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 69: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 70: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 71: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 72: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 73: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 74: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 75: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 76: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 77: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 78: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 79: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 80: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 81: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 82: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 83: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 84: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 85: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 86: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 87: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 88: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 89: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 90: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 91: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 92: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 93: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 94: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 95: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 96: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 97: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 98: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 99: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 100: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 101: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 102: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 103: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 104: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 105: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 106: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 107: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 108: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 109: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 110: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 111: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 112: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 113: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 114: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 115: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 116: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 117: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 118: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 119: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 120: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 121: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 122: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 123: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 124: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 125: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 126: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 127: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 128: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 129: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 130: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 131: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 132: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 133: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 134: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 135: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 136: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 137: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 138: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 139: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 140: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 141: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 142: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 143: 10.51 per cent. Schemes 144: 10.51 per cent. Schemes

Open	High	Low	Close	Vol	Open	High	Low	Close	Vol	
Three Month Sterling					US Treasury Bond					
Mar 88	90.87	90.67	90.83	90.85	2094	Mar 88	87-26	87-50	87-17	2412 8
Mar 89	90.64	90.44	90.60	90.62	1018	Jun 88	NT	NT	86-22	
Mar 90	90.69	90.49	90.44	90.44	218	Jun 89	NT	NT	85-22	
Jun 88	NT	NT	90.23	90.23	6	Long Gilt	117-00	117-00	117-00	
Jun 89	NT	NT	90.22	90.22	0	Long Gilt	118-07	118-07	118-05	
Jun 90	NT	NT	90.22	90.22	0	Long Gilt	118-05	118-05	118-05	
Three Month Eurodollar					FT-SE 100					
Mar 88	92.07	92.02	92.03	92.04	1469	Mar 87	175.50	176.00	174.00	174.20
Mar 89	92.07	92.00	92.03	92.04	1469	Mar 88	175.50	176.00	174.00	174.20
Mar 90	91.78	91.60	91.78	91.78	103	Mar 89	175.50	176.00	174.00	174.20
Jun 88	91.65	91.45	91.61	91.61	21	Mar 90	175.50	176.00	174.00	174.20
Jun 89	91.21	91.21	91.21	91.21	2	Japanese Gov Bond	108.52	108.52	108.52	545
Jun 90	91.03	91.03	91.03	91.03	2	Mar 88	108.00	108.05	108.07	108.07
						Jun 88	NT	NT	108.07	

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MERCHANDISE IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. SOME LINES ARE AVAILABLE AT LARGER BRANCHES ONLY.

Portfolio Gold

From your portfolio card check your eight share price movements, on this page only. Add them up to give you your overall total and check this against the daily dividend figure. If it matches, you have won outright or a share of the total daily prize money stated. If you are a winner follow the claim procedure on the back of your card. You must always have your card available when claiming. Game rules appear on the back of your card.

No.	Company	Group	Gain or Loss
1	Robur	Building Roads	
2	Calsonic	Shipping	
3	Norona	Industrial L-R	
4	Yorkshire Chem	Chemicals/Plas	
5	Black	Electronics	
6	CAP Group	Electronics	
7	Portals	Industrial L-R	
8	Utd Newspapers (an)	Newspapers/Pub	
9	Hampson Ind	Industrial E-K	
10	Vibropan	Building Roads	
11	BT Group	Telecoms	
12	Freemantle	Media/Entertain	
13	Burns (an)	Oil & Gas	
14	Atlantic Comp	Electronics	
15	Fish Design	Paper/Print/Adv	
16	Robinson (Thomson)	Industrial L-R	
17	Adwest	Industrial A-D	
18	Shalfbury	Property	
19	Cater Allen	Banking/Discount	
20	Silvestra	Industrial S-Z	
21	Berrett (H)	Industrial A-D	
22	King China City (an)	Industrial E-K	
23	Amrad	Oil & Gas	
24	Red Executive	Industrial L-R	
25	Leisure Int	Leisure	
26	Tricentral	Oil & Gas	
27	Cook (Wm)	Industrial A-D	
28	Glenmore	Property	
29	Benlos	Industrial A-D	
30	BPB Ind (an)	Building Roads	
31	Wattmough	Paper/Print/Adv	
32	AAH	Industrial A-D	
33	Geoffrey Broadbent	Textiles	
34	Telfos	Industrial S-Z	
35	Perfield	Industrial L-R	
36	Rex Bros	Banking/Discount	
37	Polaco-Musay	Chemicals/Plas	
38	Manitex	Industrial E-K	
39	Bico	Industrial A-D	
40	Br Via	Industrial S-Z	
41	Spray Race	Industrial A-D	
42	Bowater	Industrial A-D	
43	YRM	Building Roads	
44	Campani	Leisure	

Please take into account any minus signs

Weekly Dividend
Please make a note of your daily totals for the weekly dividend of £8,000 in Saturday's newspaper.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN

BRITISH FUNDS

1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
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SHORTS (Under Five Years)						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

FIVE TO FIFTEEN YEARS						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

OVER FIFTEEN YEARS						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

UNDATED						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

INDEX LINKED						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

BANKS, DISCOUNT, HP						
1987	High	Low	Open	Close	Change	%
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
101	101.00	101.00	101.00	101.00	0.00	0.00
102	102.00	102.00	102.00	102.00	0.00	0.00
103	103.00	103.00	103.00	103.00	0.00	0.00
104	104.00	104.00	104.00	104.00	0.00	0.00
105	105.00	105.00	105.00	105.00	0.00	0.00
106	106.00	106.00	106.00	106.00	0.00	0.00
107	107.00	107.00	107.00	107.00	0.00	0.00
108	108.00	108.00	108.00	108.00	0.00	0.00
109	109.00	109.00	109.00	109.00	0.00	0.00
110	110.00	110.00	110.00	110.00	0.00	0.00
111	111.00	111.00	111.00	111.00	0.00	0.00
112	112.00	112.00	112.00	112.00	0.00	0.00
113	113.00	113.00	113.00	113.00	0.00	0.00
114	114.00	114.00	114.00	114.00	0.00	0.00
115	115.00	115.00	115.00	115.00	0.00	0.00
116	116.00	116.00	116.00	116.00	0.00	0.00
117	117.00	117.00	117.00	117.00	0.00	0.00
118	118.00	118.00	118.00	118.00	0.00	0.00
119	119.00	119.00	119.00	119.00	0.00	0.00
120	120.00	120.00	120.00	120.00	0.00	0.00

STOCK EXCHANGE PRICES

Equities quiet

ACCOUNT DAYS: Dealings began December 21. Dealings end January 8. Contango day January 11. Settlement day January 18.
Forward bargains are permitted on two previous business days

01-481 4000
PRIVATE (ADVERTISERS)

PROPERTY BUYERS' GUIDE

01-481 1986
TRADE (ADVERTISERS)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LONDON PROPERTIES

More glad tidings from
Ideal Homes

Ideal Homes are pleased to announce that their sales offices will be open as normal 10am-5pm from 27th December every day throughout the holiday period, including New Year's Day.

ASHTON

The Shires, off Barnett Wood Lane. 4 bed detached houses from £236,000. Tel: (03722) 78784

BANSTEAD

Great Ellshams, off Holly Lane. 4 bed detached houses from £186,000. Tel: (0737) 352233.

BELSIZE PARK NW3

Egan Lodge, off Haverstock Hill. 2 bed flats from £171,500. Tel: (01) 388 9367.

CHELSEA SW3

355 Kings Road. 1, 2 and 3 bed apartments from £135-£250,000. Penthouses also available. Tel: (01) 351 3551.

HACKNEY E9

Sovereign Mews, off Victoria Park Road. 1/2 bed flats and 2/3 bed townhouses from £65,000-£110,000. Tel: (01) 986 8206.

PINNER

The Willows, off Chamberlain Way. 3 bed bungalows and 5 bed houses from £220,000. Tel: (01) 868 1776.

KINGSTON UPON THAMES

The Orangery off Kingston Hill. 1 bed flats from £63,000. 4 bed houses from £160,000. Tel: (01) 546 0934.

WOKING

Songster Place, St Johns Road. 1/2 bed flats from £54,000. 2/3/4 bed houses from £75,000. Tel: (04862) 70818.

WOKING

The following sites are open 9am-4pm. The Grange, close to BR Station off Oriental Road. Studios, 1 and 2 bed flats and maisonettes from £49,250. Tel: (04862) 65957.

FLEET

Anceils Farm. Close to Junction 4 on the M3 just off B3013 Wokingham Road. 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes from £56,250. Tel: (0252) 626590.

GUILDFORD

Weybrook Park, Clay Lane off London Road. 2 and 3 bed homes from £75,500. Tel: (0483) 301298.

LITTLEHAMPTON

Wheatfields, Horsham Road leading to Fastnet Way off the main Worthing Road. 2, 3 and 4 bed homes from £46,500. Tel: (0903) 714564.

DORKING

Holmwood Park, Holmesdale Road off Horsham Road. 4 bed detached houses from £159,950. Tel: (0306) 886770. (Closed December 30th and 31st).

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION
FOR TIMESHARE PURCHASERS

The Directors of HOLIDAY EXCHANGE NETWORK LTD announce that on 3rd December 1987, Holiday Exchange Network Ltd withdrew its membership application to the TDA (Timeshare Developers Association).

The decision to withdraw was based upon the Timeshare Developers Association's policies regarding consumer protection. The TDA code of conduct requires only a minimum 5 day cooling-off (rescission) period and allows the purchaser to waive his right of guaranteed security of his money.

Under these circumstances Holiday Exchange Network Ltd cannot support the TDA at this time. When the TDA strengthens these policies in favour of the consumer, Holiday Exchange Network Ltd will reconsider its decision.

For further details contact:
Consumer Services Department
HOLIDAY EXCHANGE NETWORK LTD
Tel: 01-235 9776
Ext: 15/16

OVERSEAS PROPERTIES

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PAPHOS CYPRUS

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MEDIA & MARKETING

BYLINES

Called to Ranks

The Rank Organisation's proposal for a pay-TV film channel looks like fuelling the battle between the Home Office and the Department of Trade and Industry for control of television.

Rank has been advised by consultant Charles Jonscher, who last year wrote a report for the Home Office on subscription television. He suggested to Rank that if room cannot be found in the Home Office's proposed legislation on broadcasting to accommodate the proposal, it could still go ahead under the existing law.

Rank needs only to ask British Telecom or Mercury to apply to the DTI on its behalf for a licence to operate a point-to-multipoint telecommunications service. Because a pay-TV service would be available only to a "closed user group" (even if there were two or three million subscribers) it is not, argues Jonscher, broadcasting at all but the electronic equivalent of a corner video store. Thus it would be more appropriate for the DTI, rather than the Home Office, to rule.

Dusty memories

The embarrassment over the Queen's Christmas broadcast of Michael Cole, BBC TV's royal correspondent, recalls an earlier run-in with the Palace. More than 20 years ago the young E. Dexter Cole, as he was then known, was an Anglia reporter when Prince Charles appeared in a revue at Trinity College, Cambridge, as a singing dushman. Cole interviewed the dushman on whom the sketch was based, and sought a comment from Charles. The Prince politely turned him down, but his enquiry was not amused and lodged a formal protest. Eighteen months later Cole quit Anglia for the BBC in Norwich, but the two events were unconnected. As Cole says: "The BBC were paying better money."

Rest in peace

Peace News, flagship of the pacifist movement for 51 years, has ceased publication, a victim of falling circulation (down to 3,100 from a peak of 20,000), high staff turnover and shortage of money. But all is not lost: a relaunch is planned next September after a special edition of a new-look Peace News to coincide with the Aldermaston march at the start of April. The magazine will have broader coverage of human rights, green issues and women's issues as well as disarmament.

Divide and Yule

Christmas is when you discover who your friends are... BBC radio news and current affairs sent out 375 invitations to the department's Christmas party in

the BBC Council Chamber room, which holds about 200. So the current affairs people were scheduled to start the festivities at 6.30 pm, and their colleagues in the newsroom at 8.30 pm, just as the free drink looked likely to run out. The disappointed newsroom was - until the appointment of Jenny Abramsky as news and current affairs boss - accustomed to rule the roost in Broadcasting House.

Briefly...

The new editor of Britain's biggest-selling women's weekly, *Woman*, is once again a man. David Dumas, deputy editor of *Woman's Own*, succeeds Richard Barber... The Christmas-New Year edition of *Radio Times* has sold 11 million copies, 400,000 more than last year and far ahead of the normal three million... ITV revenue suffered the unusual blow of a drop in advertising revenue in November: income fell nearly 2 per cent on the same month last year to £127.4 million... The financially-pressed National Union of Journalists has agreed a £100,000 package of cuts, including a smaller annual meeting, a staff freeze and fewer members and meetings for industrial councils... Staff at *The Listener* are not happy. Not only did they suddenly move offices last week, but new editor Alan Coren even failed to show up at their Christmas party. Meanwhile, the first choice for the key post of advertising manager-publisher turned it down.

Nick Higham

Hopes and charities

After last year's row over the doggie in the window, the law might relax over appeals advertising on television. But, reports Andrew Lycett, some charities still have doubts



Selling a pup: last year's RSPCA dog in the window. The IBA said that it had flouted the rules

ADVERTISING SPENDING - SELECTED CHARITIES

1987				
Charity	Agency	July-Sept	Annual	Where spent (per cent)
Spastic Society	DNB & B	414,000	515,000	TV 100
Cancer Research Campaign	Yellowhammer	317,000	504,000	15 - 85
Imperial Cancer Research	KHBB	262,000	294,000	100
Nat. Soc. for Cancer Relief	Media Bus/Davis Walker	152,000	385,000	100
Brit. Heart Found.	DNB & B	102,000	400,000	100
Royal Society Prot. Birds	KHBB	93,000	341,000	100
C of England Children's Soc.	Yellowhammer	85,000	395,000	100
Multiple Sclerosis	Davidson Pearce	71,000	438,000	8 - 92

Source: Media Expenditure Analysis Ltd (MEAL)

their services free; the charity got a £186,000 film for £15,000.

However, this kind of relationship can create problems. SportAid's Cater says that most agencies are only willing to take on charity work if there is media space to be bought, because they get paid on commission. "They are not

quite so interested in organizations like us, where there is no great spend." Conversely, the larger the charity, the harder it might be for it to get work done at "cut price." An example of this conflict of interests was Greenpeace's recent, surprising, parting of ways with Yellowhammer. The charity

now works with KHBB, a Saatchi subsidiary. Gallie says that Yellowhammer having "changed", but John Ward, managing director of Yellowhammer, makes no bones about the fact that Greenpeace wanted "everything for nothing".

Despite its obligation to run on business-like lines, Ward

says his agency usually "goes easy" on charities. As a result, "we tend to have a much more informal relationship with them, our terms of business are much looser."

This informal relationship, with cut-price access to creative talent, may suit medium-sized charities. But it aggravates problems with the bigger organizations.

Six months ago, Oxford moved from H. Grey, basically a direct marketing agency, to DMMB in circumstances its director of fund raising, Sam Clarke, would rather not discuss.

Mike Smithson of the RSPCA is not so reticent. In a mirror manoeuvre around the same time, he switched his £300,000-a-year account from Saatchi to Chapter One, a direct marketing specialist. To him, the issue is clear: "If you don't pay the full rate, you don't get the full rate." He quotes a catalogue of differences of opinion between the RSPCA and Saatchi's creative people - like the campaign on animal cruelty when the agency wanted to photograph a dog fight using dead dogs manipulated by wire. "We just could not allow it," says Smithson.

The RSPCA's move to a direct marketing house reflects a trend among charities. Techniques of getting response to coupons are in great demand.

However, TBWA's Harari believes new legislation allowing donations to charity from company payrolls will act as a filip to charity advertising. Traditional campaigns, run in conjunction with direct marketing, are useful in raising a charity's profile, particularly if it has a good network of shops and helpers to follow up the message.

Last month Yellowhammer won one of the best charity accounts around - ActionAid, worth £850,000 a year. But overall billings for charity advertisements last year were £12 million, a paltry 0.2 per cent of this year's overall advertising spending of £5.8 billion.

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Streets apart

Who will stay in the heartland of the Press?

The printing presses are closing, the journalists are busy relocating in Kensington, Battersea and the Isle of Dogs. Has Fleet Street become, as Eddy Shah once hoped, just another street?

Not quite. The nationals might be on the move, but Fleet Street remains the home for most of the London offices of the provincial Press. Around its nooks and crannies can be found the stalwarts of the provinces: the *Dundee Courier and Advertiser*, the *Scotsman*, the *Birmingham Post*, the *Shropshire Star*, the *Wolverhampton Express* and a host of others.

They intend to stay, at least for the moment. Fleet Street has great advantages for journalists. It is conveniently placed for gathering news from the City and the Houses of Parliament - an advantage echoed with some wistfulness by the new wave in Docklands. It is well set up with messenger services, bringing round every sort of handout.

But as leases run out, Fleet Street may not continue to host the provincial newspapers. The scattering of journalists' bases across London means that there is no longer an overwhelming case for insisting on staying, particularly given the high rents.

One landmark not in danger is Lutyens's Press Association headquarters, at No.85. The building hums with news gatherers. Apart from PA itself, there are the offices of the *Irish Times*, the *Irish Field*, the German Press Agency, the *Chicago Tribune*, Reuters, of course, is still there, not yet having decided to move its editorial division.

That other great institution, El Vino's, is also likely to continue operations, although the tone, those who have stayed on lament, is not what it was.

Kate Finch

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Applications by 15th January 1988.

DERNGATE

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At Derngate, Northampton, one of the country's busiest entertainment centres, is seeking to appoint an experienced Marketing Officer.

You will be responsible for the effective marketing of Derngate's very wide range of presentations and facilities: the control of the publicity budget; and staff responsibilities.

You will also contribute to the overall policy of the building by being a member of the Management Team. You must have a knowledge of print design and production, experience in a marketing environment within the entertainment/arts industry, and the ability to motivate staff, allocate work priorities and work under considerable pressure.

Application form and job description are available from the Chief Executive and Town Clerk (Personnel), Northampton Borough Council, 61 Derngate, Northampton NN1 1UW. Telephone Northampton (0604) 29033, ext. 328.

CLOSING DATE: January 13, 1988

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OLYMPIC GAMES

Organizers hopeful of full member acceptance

From Gavin Bell, Seoul

Olympic organizers, buoyed by the acceptance from two Eastern bloc nations, predicted yesterday that they will host the first boycott-free summer Games since 1972.

Kim Chong-ha, the president of the (South) Korean Olympic Committee, said Hungary and East Germany officially notified Seoul of their participation, the first Communist states to do so, bringing the number of acceptances to 115.

"Our country welcomes these declarations wholeheartedly," Kim added, "and we are now sure that all 167 members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will take part."

Asian and Western diplomats in Seoul generally agreed that the other main allies of communist North Korea would all have signalled their acceptance by the IOC's January 17 deadline. They were less clear what attitude Pyongyang, Seoul's sworn enemy, would take.

Meanwhile, security agencies are prepared for "any eventuality" which might threaten the Games.

"We are very much concerned about security before and during the Games," Park Seh Jik, president of the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, said. "We can guarantee security as much as any advanced country, and perhaps more than that."

Park was keen to reassure visitors to the Games who may have been disturbed by political violence and the

destruction of a Korean airliner, that they need have nothing to fear. A former army general, he said his confidence was based on the efficiency of South Korea's intelligence, on the support of its civilian population to combat terrorism, and on international security cooperation.

"We are proud of the track record of our security," he said, "which have been tested over the years at numerous international gatherings."

Referring to a bomb attack at Seoul's Kimpoo airport on the eve of the 1986 Asian Games, he said: "After that incident, the entire population became agents to prevent attacks. This is a great asset."

South Korea blame North Korea for the sabotage of a Korean Air jet with 115 people on board over the Andaman Sea last month.

"We must prevent by all means such barbaric acts... we have the support of the international community."

The vast majority of South Koreans wished to safeguard the Games, he said, and the Government must persuade dissident students to be "more prudent and considerate in their behaviour."

The officials added that preparations for the Games, with a total budget of \$3.1 billion (about £1.7 billion) were proceeding on schedule.

The only facilities still under construction, the swimming arena and apartments for the athletes and journalists, were expected to be completed in April and June.

Chris Moore finds an heir to a throne captured by the thrills of bobsledding



Royal bob a job: helpers make last-minute adjustments to the sled of Prince Albert, of Monaco, as he prepares to tackle another heater-akelter Cresta Run

When royalty catch the Olympic spirit

Albert Grimaldi, more widely recognized as Prince Albert, is certain to be the most photographed loser at the Winter Olympics in Calgary.

The heir to the Monaco dynasty will represent the principality in the bobsleigh in February, two months after making his international debut in last weekend's two-man competition at the third round of the Foster's World Cup series in Igls.

Monaco will be in good company, alongside the likes of the Virgin Islands, in typifying the modern Olympic ideal that the Olympics still provide an

although Prince Albert, an inveterate adventure-seeker who has recently returned from trips to the Sahara and forests of Senegal, insisted: "We are most definitely not going to Calgary as tourists to make up the numbers."

"I don't pretend we can make any realistic challenge. But like everyone else personal pride is at stake, and I will be trying my hardest, not to cover myself in glory but just to give a performance that gives me satisfaction. All of us can only do our best, and providing I put in a opportunity when it is more important to compete than win,

respectable finish I will be more than happy."

Of the 37 drivers to complete the course here on Sunday, Prince Albert came 32nd. But since taking up the sport a little over a year ago he estimates he has made around 200 runs in practice and attended four bobsleigh schools — cranking only four times.

"The first time was at St Moritz when I turned over in the sled. I remember thinking it was a long way down to the bottom but I only suffered some bumps and bruises."

"My father was a bit surprised when I first told him I was

going to try the sport. But he did not attempt to dissuade me and he'll probably be going to Calgary to watch the Olympic race."

"My biggest problem has been trying to find a brake-man to give me anything like a competitive start. The population of Monaco is 27,000, but only 5,000 of those are nationals. Take out the women and children and old men, and you are not left with many, strong, fit and fast athletes."

"But we've been training since March and despite some frustration, I still get a real rush from competing. The greatest challenge perhaps is trying to last-

grade two extremes. A lot of bobsled teams go late in the start. Pushing a 200kg sled flat out over 50 metres is no easy task. For the driver, it's a question of complete concentration and fitness, rather than speed and strength. It's a totally thrilling and exhilarating experience."

"How long I will be able to compete internationally is difficult to say. A lot depends on all my other commitments. But I certainly plan to carry on after the Olympics and hope that my involvement will prompt others from Monaco to take up the sport and represent us in the next Olympics."

SWIMMING

Jameson sound in defence

Florida (Reuters) — Andy Jameson, of Britain, aged 22, successfully defended his United States Open title in the 100m butterfly with a victory over Anthony Nesty, of Suriname, the Pan American Games gold medal winner. Jameson clocked 53.66sec, the third fastest time this year. Pablo Morales, of the United States, the world record holder, was fourth.

Anders Holmertz, of Sweden, ranked No. 1 in the world for the men's 200m freestyle after upsetting world record holder Michael Gross, of West Germany, at the European Championships, also won the event here.

Holmertz, aged 19, took gold by a full second over Matt Cetlinski, of the United States. The Swede clocked 1min 49.09sec while Cetlinski touched in 1:50.10, with Sean Kilian, of the United States, third in 1:50.57.

Holmertz, second on Sunday night in the 400m freestyle with a new Swedish national record of 3:50.03, has already qualified for the Seoul Olympics in both the 400m and 200m freestyle events.

Hong Qian, of China, aged 16, continued her impressive form in the women's 100m butterfly with a victory over the Chinese, ranked fourth in the world in the event, previously took the honours at the Pan Pacific Championships.

Janet Evans, of the United States, following on from her victory in the 400m freestyle on Sunday when she broke a nine-year-old world record, was untested in the 400m individual medley. Her time of 4:39.75 lowered her own meet record and was over nine seconds better than her closest competitor, fellow-American Tami Bruce.

United States Olympians Betsy Mitchell and Mary Wayte also won individual events. Mitchell, the current world record holder in the 200m backstroke, won the 100m backstroke.

Wayte, the Olympic gold medal winner in the 200m freestyle, broke her own meet record for the event with a time of 1:59.24. Luminia Dobrescu, of Romania, was second in 2:01.54 and June Croft, of Britain, was third in 2:02.17.

TENNIS

Romanian is granted asylum in US

Miami (AP) — A Romanian player was granted political asylum yesterday after defecting on Monday at Miami International Airport.

Madalina Voinea, aged 17, was turned over to FBI agents, Rey Valdes, a Metro-Dade police spokesman said. "She basically contacted our officers at our airport district and asked for protection," Valdes said.

According to Ayrel Segarceanu, Miss Voinea's coach, she arrived in Miami with the understanding that she might be allowed to play in an international tournament here if she won a qualifying match on Tuesday. He would not comment on why Miss Voinea had sought asylum.

Rhyming for charity in the style of Edward Lear

Nonsensical sporting figures

Simon Barnes, in his Sporting Diary in *The Times*, invited readers to send him their sporting limericks. The result is a collection called *There was a young fellow called Glover*... just published by the Kingswood Press (£3.95) with all royalties going to Christian Aid. Here is a selection from the book.

An archer called Norman le Beau Scored gold after gold in a reau.

When asked to explain His success, he was vain: "I'm simply the best, don't you kneau?"

D. A. H. BYATT

A punter from County Kildare, Grew rich at the dogs (which is rare).

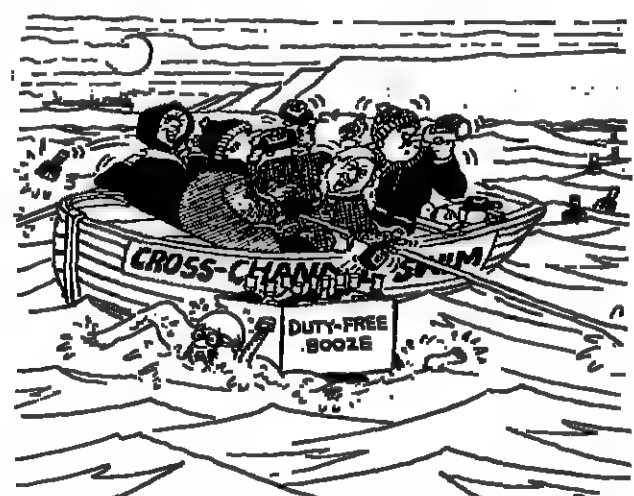
When asked how it's done, He replied: "Just for fun, I bet ten pounds 'win' on the hare."

ROSE MITRE



A trendy young golfer called Deans Had a bad case of "yips" on the greens, But it wasn't his putter That caused him to stutter, But the tees in his ultra tight jeans.

MICHAEL CLAUGHTON



Said a cross-channel swimmer named Jim: "Though the exercise keeps me in trim, The ferry's much quicker And duty-free liquor Don't half weigh you down when you swim!"

JOHN DINAN

There was a young fellow called Glover Who bowled fifteen wickets in an over, Which had never been done By a clergyman's son On a Sunday, in August, at Dover.

ANON

There was a young stand-off from Neath, Who habitually played in false teeth. When dropping a goal He swallowed them whole; His opponents are sending the wreath.

ANON

My uncle, Hieronymus Kale, Wore his bowler when out for a sail: "It protects me," he said, "When the boom strikes my head, And it's useful if one needs to bail."

B. R. DAVIS

TABLE TENNIS: GETTING DRESSED UP FOR THE WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT

Prean's successful revolution

By Richard Eaton

Next month's Europe v Asia match in Clevedon could prove a watershed in the fortunes of the sport. Sponsored by the Leeds Building Society, it has the sport's biggest prize fund.

It will bring about the finest entry in the 57-year history of the English Open and has attracted the most encouraging television developments since the world championships here 10 years ago.

Table tennis' often bloody revolution is thus bearing fruit. Even those least interested in the sport may be aware of the extent of the carnage — the abolition of the selectors, the removal of the national director of coaching and his most senior coach, the sackings or resignations of four out of five of the nine chairmen in charge of the departments, and the walk-out in protest of the two senior statesmen of the English Table Tennis Association.

The chairman John Prean, has been described as a brasher and a keeper of vendettas by his opponents, as a saviour and a supreme salesman by his supporters. His virtues may be mixed; his success at the moment is unequivocal.



Prean: supreme salesman

The Leeds sponsorship is part of a £8.5 million package, but there seems little doubt that the building society is going to get value for money.

There is to be five hours of table tennis on television within a short space of time, two-and-a-half hours of it in the Europe v Asia match. More importantly the presentation of the sport on television is to be given a radical re-think.

"It is our intention to feature table tennis in new and exciting

ways," Adrian Metcalfe, head of sport on Channel 4, said. The Channel 4 producer, Derek Brandon, said: "We are planning on giving it the same treatment as we give to the American sports."

Among the reasons why they will be giving a long hard look at table tennis with a view to developing it further, is the same one that caused the BBC to give it more than 40 hours in 1977. It is one of the few sports virtually everyone knows.

It is this that has helped make it, despite a decade of decay in this country, one of the biggest sports in the world. More than 130 countries are affiliated to the international federation.

Other reasons are important too. The English game has bucked up quite a bit recently. Three men have earned places in the Olympic Games next year, while Desmond Douglas, Alan Cooke and Carl Prean, the chairman's son, could get into the finest men's team England have had in more than a quarter of a century.

A large overdraft has been reduced. A new chief executive, Ted Wallington, is giving the game a better image.

The talents of the deputy chairman, Alan Ransome, perhaps the most knowledgeable and experienced man in the ETFA, have been an important supplement to the Prean revolution. At last the whole enterprise is acquiring a sense of credibility with people that matter.

Once that happened, success was always likely to follow close behind. The product itself is potentially excellent. The speed, skill, and delight of hand of table tennis are second to none.

The reflexes have to be seen to be believed. Despite problems with combination bats, which have been largely solved, and short rallies, which as yet have not, the best table tennis is exhilarating even for those who watch it week in, week out.

Most noticeably the small table fits the small screen. Whether the 21 up scoring fits it, too, has been a subject for some destructively controversial debate.

But the one-time parlour pastime, which has already become an enormous international sport, now looks as though it may be getting dressed up for the world of entertainment as well.

SKIING

Flood valley gains from Swiss victors

Bormio, Italy (AP) — Swiss skiers swept the three top positions in the men's and women's World Cup parallel slalom, staged here yesterday in a show of solidarity with this alpine area ravaged last summer by floods.

The races, run on the lower part of Bormio's downhill course, brought Zurbriegen and Cerit their first victories since the new World Cup season began in November, though the results counted only towards the Nation's Cup. They gave Switzerland back the lead with 163 points to 721 for Austria. West Germany remain third on 334 with Italy fourth on 299.

Zurbriegen raced in the final against his compatriot, Joel Gaspoz, and beat him by 0.658 seconds while in the women's event Cerit edged out her team colleague, Corinne Schmidhauser, by 0.578sec.

Martin Hangl, another Swiss, won the men's third place playoff against Roland Pfister, of Austria. The World Cup downhill champion, Michela Figini, of Switzerland, beat Christa Kinshofer, of Austria, 1.25 seconds ahead of Zurbriegen with 91 points. The Austrians Günther Mader and Hubert Strolz are third and fourth with 45 and 42 points.

It was the last race on the circuit before the Christmas break and Zurbriegen was clearly delighted with his victory. "I enjoyed racing today even though it was difficult to concentrate in an environment without any snow," he said.

The overall standings. But it is a tenuous lead and Tomba will almost certainly find that Pirmin Zurbriegen, of Switzerland, fourth in Sunday's slalom — his weakest discipline — has too great a repertoire of skills.

Not that the Swiss have been entirely without problems, though matters are nothing like as gloomy as the Zurich tabloid newspaper, *Blick*, saw fit to paint when, earlier in the season, it banner-headed: "The end of Swiss dominance."

Their thirst for success remains as unquenchable as ever and Zurbriegen, and Michela Figini, who heads the women's standings, seem certain to win an Olympic title of some description. Miss Walliser, though, has been less consistent and there is also some concern at the form of top slalomers, Vrenni Schneider and Joel Gaspoz.

The Swiss women, and their men too, unless the Canadians, Rob Boyd, and Brian Stannule, perform consistently at the levels shown at Val Gardena, look destined to claim a major part of the downhill medals, though less certain is their supremacy in the technical disciplines.

The Austrians, who performed woefully last season, have partially redeemed themselves, especially in the women's events.

Tomba, a specialist slalommer who has the season without a World Cup victory to his name, now enjoys a 34-point lead in

the overall standings. But it is a tenuous lead and Tomba will almost certainly find that Pirmin Zurbriegen, of Switzerland, fourth in Sunday's slalom — his weakest discipline — has too great a repertoire of skills.

YACHTING

Bond sets deadline for his cup challenge

Perth, Australia (Reuters) — Alan Bond announced yesterday that he will suspend his second such America's Cup campaign if the San Diego Yacht Club (SDYC) does not reverse its decision soon to exclude a multiple challenge for the trophy.

Bond, who won the cup in 1983 but lost it this year when the SDYC regained it for the United States, said work on *Valiant Marika* would halt in 10 days if the defenders refused to accept challengers other than New Zealand.

"This is it. We are giving them our last opportunity to come to their senses," John Longley, Bond's syndicate manager and crew member, said.

Michael Fay, a New Zealand merchant banker, last month won a court ruling requiring the San Diego club to accept his challenge next year in 90-foot maxi-yachts — as decreed by the Deed of Gift covering the 136-year-old trophy.

The New York Supreme Court rejected San Diego's plea to alter the deed so that a defender could set the terms for the race. The club had planned to defend in 1990 with 12-metre class boats, which have been used since 1956. In response to the court decision, the SDYC said it would race only the first challenger, Fay's *Mercury Bay* Racing Club.

At least six other countries wanted to challenge in the huge yacht race, reminiscent of the class sloops sailed in the event's pre-Second World War days. In a statement, Bond said: "The San Diego Yacht Club has flown in the face of tradition. It has completely destroyed America's Cup with its lack of direction, its inability to act and its blocking techniques."

"I have never experienced such a narrow and incomplete race," he added. "The San Diego Yacht Club would not be holding the cup if we hadn't won it... and San Diego is now saying it does not want us to compete in 1988."

Longley said Bond had spent more than \$1 million (about £550,000) on preliminary work on *Valiant Marika* with construction due to start on January 4.

"That's the deadline San Diego have to meet for Alan Bond's participation. There is not enough time otherwise," Longley said. "But we are dealing with irrational people and you cannot spend money where irrational people are setting the terms."

Fling all round by Lirdlaw

From a Correspondent Sydney

Irvine Lirdlaw should never forget December 22, 1987. He got married, it was his birthday and he returned home to a wedding reception to find the yacht he had chartered to represent Hong Kong in the AWA Southern Cross Cup had won race four of the series.

Lirdlaw had expected that his wedding day would not clash with the racing here, but once the United States team were accused of "cheating" by the off-shore race organizers over a sail measurement technically, a day's racing was lost before the rift was healed and Lirdlaw found himself double booked.

But it all turned out well for Lirdlaw. While his wedding went ahead, Harland Fling made excellent start in a free 18-20 knot southerly breeze with a big swell. She was then fast all around the 23-mile course to justify the fears about her ability of Chris Dickson, New Zealand's America's Cup final skipper, and won her second race of the series. Harland Fling is now going so well she should be a strong contender for the triple scoring Sydney to Hobart race, the last of the series.

Jubilation (Jack James, United States), also started well and placed second, Imin Sec behind Harland Fling for her best performance of the series. Third was Fair Share, steered by Peter Lester, followed 23 seconds behind by Mad Max (Mal Canning), both of New Zealand.

Fagacious V (Gary Appleby), was next, another 13 seconds behind and the Australians lost this tight tussle between the one-tonners. The series when she broke a headsail halyard on the first windward beat and another headsail sheet past the windward mark to leave her handicapped with only one halyard. That meant for the mark roundings she was under main sail alone while the surviving halyard was constantly switched from headsail to spinnaker.

RESULTS: Yacht 1, New Zealand, 88pts; 2, Hong Kong, 85; 3, Australia, 74; 4, United States, 67; Overall, 23 seconds behind by Mad Max (Mal Canning), both of New Zealand.

FA TOPPERS: First round regatta: Lizard V South Liverpool; Springport V South East.

GREAT WELLS LEAGUE: Premier division: Warragulfield V Rosedale; FA YOUTH CUP: 2nd round regatta: Churton V Savelton (7.0).

SPORT ON TV

BOWLS: Jack High, Gateway, 8.00 p.m. Warragulfield V Rosedale, 8.30 p.m.

YACHTING: Australia's Cup from the Sydney to Hobart race, 8.00 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. on first race last August. BBC2, 1.30 a.m.

RACING: KING GEORGE VI CHASE CELEBRATES FIFTY MEMORABLE YEARS

Glorious history of a racing ritual

By Jack Waterman

In recent years, no outdoor sport has seen a greater rise in popularity than National Hunt racing.

On Saturday, one of its great events, the King George VI Chase, now sponsored by Rank with £50,000 added money, celebrates its half-century of existence, and 40 years of growing acceptance amid huge holiday crowds as an indispensable part of Boxing Day sporting ritual.

In 1937, Coronation Year, the race was inaugurated and was won by Mr J V Rank's Southern Hero, eventual winner of three Scottish Grand Nationals. Jumping was then still the poor relation of flat racing, a situation essentially the same when, after the war, the Kempton Park executive took a bold step and upgraded the King George VI to the third-richest steeplechase in the calendar after the Grand National and Cheltenham Gold Cup.

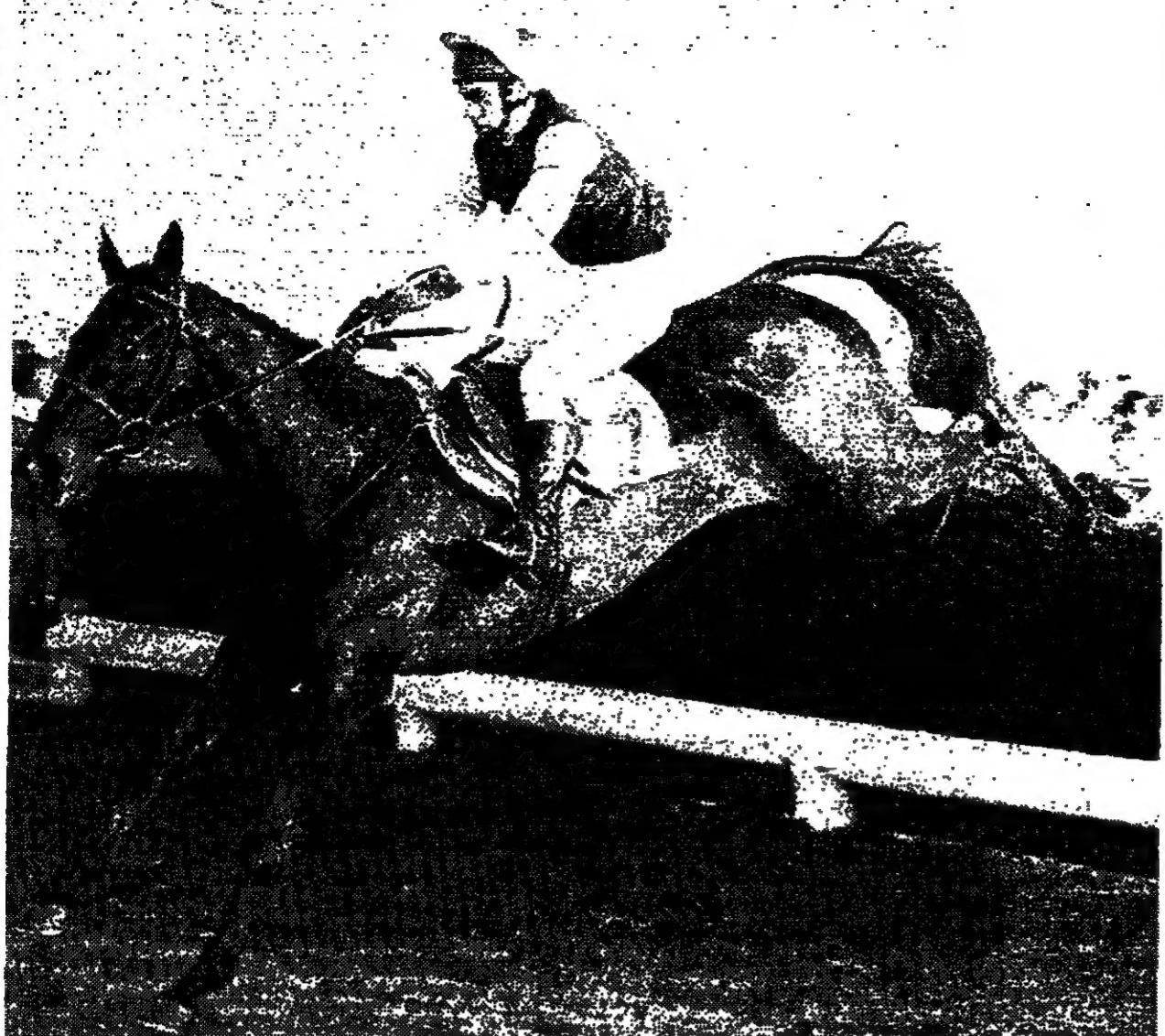
Their initiative, now reinforced by sponsorship, has played a significant part in the rise of the winter game for the sportsman and the public, of which so many racers now show a preference.

In helping to transform the scene for staying chasers, the King George VI Chase has, on the way, produced a roll-call of horses who, far more than on the flat, had to be taken firmly and for a longer time to the public's heart.

Halloween, Mandarin, Pen-dra, Captain Christy and Silver Back have all won it twice. Wayward Lad, who ran his last race only this year — and whose name is commemorated by the following event on Saturday's card — had to run his heart out for every one of his record three victories, the final one of which was also an incredible sixth training success in eight seasons for the Dickinson family.

Aside from multiple victories, none who was present will forget the single successes of Manicou, the very first chaser owned by the Queen Mother, back in 1950, and Mill House, the horse born to live in the shadow of Arkle.

Like Arkle, Mill House turned his victory into a



Wayward Lad, seen here with Robert Earnshaw, is the only horse to have won the King George VI Chase three times

procession, as did Captain Christy, whose success in 1975 when 11-10 joint-favourite with Bala, by 30 lengths and in record time, is widely regarded as the best ever King George performance.

But for every winner making every yard of the running, there have been epic struggles on the run-in. Mandarin beating Pointman a head in 1959, almost on the post, is just one to recall, and equally significant is the same gallant horse's misfortune in the race the season before when he fractured a fibula.

The great Arkle won in 1963, but what many spectators will remember equally is the sight on the far side of Duasikr faintly falling, Colonel Whitbread, ironically, had sportingly put this great two-mile chaser in simply to make the pace for Arkle.

The following year, the career of Arkle himself ended in the race when he broke a pedal-bone, and though fighting on up the run-in, was beaten by Dermot and thereafter retired.

But the tapestry of National Hunt racing is not woven only

with the dreams that failed to come true, but those that triumphantly became reality. A year ago, Desert Orchid's trainer, David Elsworth, seemed to be practically the only man in the land who believed that his gallant front-running grey could win the King George.

How Desert Orchid did it, and became the racing public's favourite chaser, is now history. The bookmakers offer 13-8 on for a repeat performance on Saturday, and in anticipation of enormous crowds — there was a record 20,000 in 1986 before Desert

Orchid's immense popularity — Kempton has made special arrangements.

There will be additional car parking in the centre of the course, gates will be open at 10am and the strong advice from the executive is to arrive no later than 11.15am.

To help tempt early arrivals, a special breakfast has been laid on, which may illustrate not only how seriously Desert Orchid and a bumper card are taken as crowd-pullers, but how hardy the 1987 National Hunt enthusiasts are in their search for sport and pleasure.

Battle-scarred Goldstein keeps whims of fortune in perspective

By Dick Hinder

In the space of one hour at Murky Plumpton last month, Ray Goldstein enjoyed a 100-1 victory in the handicap chase and collected a 100-1 consolation in the novice's chase.

"That sums up my career," says Goldstein, "just when I'm going well and riding winners, soon comes another injury."

It says much for the fortitude of the Lewes-based jockey that he has survived some appalling injuries with unflinching determination in his quest for recognition.

The 35-year-old, affectionately known as "The Iron Man of Plumpton" where he has been leading rider for the past five seasons, accepts the hard reality that he will lose rides to more fashionable jockeys. "That's part of the game, but I do get upset when I lose a winner because of injury."

In a career spanning nearly 1,000 rides, and 115 winners, Goldstein's body has endured more breakages than Harrods' china department in the January sales.

A fall from Bluecher in last season's Arkle Chase at Cheltenham left the curly-haired rider with a double fracture of the right arm, a broken left collar-bone and smashed ribs.

The previous season he broke his left leg in two places. Other injuries included a fractured skull, both wrists broken, squashed vertebrae, broken neck bones, broken ribs, a broken nose twice, and battered fingers including one needing 24 stitches after the knuckle was crushed.

But if Goldstein is battle-scarred, he certainly is not weary. "Some young riders hit the heights too quickly and are

burnt out after a couple of years. I was a late starter and it's getting better and better for me."

Goldstein, brought up in Tottenham, got his first chance in racing when a schoolboy pal found him a job in Alex Kilpatrick's Coltingbourne Duns stable. That was in 1967 and he stayed four years.

"I needed more experience, particularly fast work, in a mixed yard so I joined Mick Mearns at Coltingbourne Duns stable. That was in 1967 and he stayed four years."

"I thought there would be more opportunities for me there, but at the same time four other young riders, including Paddy O'Brien and Scobie Croghan, had the same idea and were limited."

Goldstein returned to Lewes and started riding winners for Giles Beeson. Just when he was beginning to make a name for himself, he lost his claim after the Jockey Club changed the age ruling for conditional riders.

He settled in Lewes, where his wife, Sue, runs a riding school, and through hard graft built up solid support from local trainers.

Headfield trainer Gardie Grissell and also rides regularly for Carshalton-based Roger Curtis, John Bolton and John Fitch-Heyes.

"It's been a hard slog. Sometimes long journeys for just one ride. But it has been worth it," Goldstein reflected.

"There are depressing days. Days that hurt. But I get so much enjoyment riding winners for the little people in racing. It means so much to them and makes up for all the bad times."

Goldstein has few grievances about the sport he loves. "I'd like to see more prize money at the lower levels. Also, having a safety limit of 20 for novice chasers. I think Wincanton isn't much fun."

This affable family man is complimentary about the considerable safety improvements made to racetracks in recent years. His immediate hopes, though, are for ambulances with paramedics. "Serious accidents can then be dealt with on the spot, which can be so vital for head and chest injuries," he reasons.

"The ambulance people do a first class job, but after a break it can be agony taken along the bumpy track from the middle of the course. Often the ambulance then has to thread its way through the crowds before you can get to hospital for attention."

Newbury ranks top of Goldstein's courses, but at Plumpton, where he commands



Ray Goldstein: an unenviable record of injuries

such loyal support, is without question his favourite.

Roger Rowell and Gary Moore are two of his best pals in the weighing room, but John Francone is spoken of in reverent terms. "The best National Hunt jockey I've ever seen. A marvelous rider who was always prepared to help his colleagues," Goldstein enthuses.

"I had a crashing fall when Mon's Beau slipped up at Plumpton, bringing down two or three others including Francone. He came dashing across, capped my head in his hands until the ambulance men arrived and then took the trouble to find my wife and tell her I was all right."

Jockeys invariably have a sense of humour and Goldstein is no exception. Even recovering from a broken leg can have its lighter moments as Goldstein explains: "I was fed up with all the pain and the vision, so I thought it would be more therapeutic having an aquarium in the living room."

"I had lots of colourful little fish swimming around, but decided to be more adventurous and bought a bigger variety — a Blue Acara. Unfortunately, the dealer didn't tell me what he feeds on. I soon realized — it was all my other fish."

Goldstein, grateful for the continued support he receives from his wife, hopes to start a training yard when he decides to hang up his boots with a view to training later.

Meanwhile, he will be doing his damndest to ride more winners for racing's little people, surely encouraged by Stargazer's trainer, Roger Curtis, who said: "I use Ray Goldstein whenever I can. He just never stops trying."

New Tim Dunlop fund to award scholarship

By Michael Seely

A fund is to be opened for the "Tim Dunlop Memorial Traveling Scholarship", a scheme devised to help trainees in stud management by friends of the Arundel trainer John Dunlop's son Tim, who was killed in a car accident in Paris last May.

The National Stud runs a six-month scheme for up to 15 students annually. At the end of the course in June, the leading student is to be sent abroad to gain working experience. It is hoped that the new fund will finance a return air ticket to America, Australia, New Zealand.

drawn up for the construction of a new stand with three floors and nine entertainment boxes. "The work has needed doing for a long time, but the board was restricted by uncertainties over the Channel Tunnel which could have affected us," Cameron continued.

The Tote Gold Trophy at Newbury on February 13 will carry a minimum value of £50,000 with the Tote contributing £20,000.

Anyone who wishes to contribute can write to "The Tim Dunlop Memorial Traveling Scholarship", c/o Dove House, London SW10 for details. Alternatively, donations may be sent direct to the account opened in the name of the fund at Barclays Bank, 114 Fenchurch Street, London EC3P 3HY.

Folkestone is to have a new grandstand — to replace the existing 86-year-old wooden structure — and stable complex. Construction is to begin next month and 51 new boxes should be ready by March, bringing the total to 90. The total cost is some £2m.

Clack of the course David Cameron said: "The stabling is the first priority, because it has caused most dissatisfaction in the past. Plans have also been

RUGBY UNION

Making an impression on England forwards

By David Hands, Rugby Correspondent

It was always a reasonable bet, I suppose, that from England's grand-slam class of 1980 the first to re-emerge as a coach would be one of the teachers.

Seven of the side that beat Scotland are still playing of course, while two more, Fran Cotton and Bill Beaumont, have been professionalized for writing books.

But Cotton still has an input, on an individual basis, at Sale, as does Steve Smith and who knows if the latter, national Board feel so inclined, they may soon make retrospective the bye-law which allows players to write books and coach if their playing careers are over. It is worth noting, too, that this season Mike Siemen is coaching Lancashire and Peter Wheeler has become coach to Leicester's first team.

But Roger Utley, the 38-year-old Harrow schoolmaster, is the first to make an impression at national level, not so much for his track record as a coach but for the accumulated experience of a decade of international rugby plus the ability to transmit it, which has earned Harrow's senior side an enviable reputation over the six years he has had charge of them.

"Coaching has been part of my job at school but only a part," Utley said. "It hasn't been a natural progression to this current post with England."

He is now part of a three-man team, along with Geoff Cooke, manager of the national side, and John Elliott, who will select England's senior sides during the forthcoming Five Nations championship, with Utley taking special responsibility for the forwards in preparation.

Hitherto Utley's career as an all-rounder has progressed quietly. A Lancastrian who won 23 caps for England and earned a British Lions tour in 1974, he occupied all three positions in the back five of the scrum during a playing

career for Gosforth and Wasps. Injury and the demands of his teaching post gave him a natural break from club rugby.

The balance between schools rugby and senior rugby with the London Division was as much as he wanted, until Dick Greenwood asked him for help in specialist forward areas when Greenwood was England coach. Even then there was nothing inevitable about his deeper involvement with England.

"We have in excess of 45 sessions at school between September and the end of the winter term. That's a lot of time coaching people. The past few weeks have been pretty traumatic and I have had to give a lot of thought to

that's one of the things teaching youngsters helps me to remember. "The other thing is the question of attitudes. You need people with very positive attitudes towards the game. A lot of players have talent. Interesting thing is finding a way to release those talents."

It is Utley's belief that after the successful 1971 Lions visit to New Zealand, and the subsequent unbeaten tour in South Africa three years later, complacency crept into the British game. "We didn't appreciate what we had actually done. I was due to go on the 1977 Lions tour to New Zealand but missed it through injury and, looking at the players we had out there, I couldn't understand why we were not maintaining the quantum leap we had made in the early Seventies."

"But the one thing that had come through very strongly from the 1971 tour was leadership, from Doug Smith and Carwyn James. In 1974 the guys would have done anything for Syd Millar and Willie-John McBride."

Leadership, therefore, looms high on Utley's list, an aspect to which all players, not just the captain, can contribute. Another is mutual confidence: "Success at international level is about learning to cope, which is what the divisional system exists for, so that players can be taken out of their clubs and forced to adapt. If you are good enough you will cope and if you have good men around you, it helps. Everyone makes mistakes. The point of the coaching exercise is to try and minimize the mistakes."

"I'm looking forward to dealing with the players and getting the best out of them. I don't have anything to prove to anyone really. I'm not the world's greatest coach but I do have something to offer and as long as that remains useful I'll stay involved."

Utley: something to offer

the prospect of coaching England. I have enjoyed working with London and if I can take that a stage further with the national squad I will be pleased.

"It's important to remember I'm not the England coach. I'm assistant to Geoff Cooke. I have no great track record as a coach, other than with London whose record over the last three years has been relatively under-stated. But I do remember how difficult it is to actually play the game."

Wasps without nine players for match with Harlequins

By David Hands

The demands of England's trial on January 2 will create a problem for Wasps, who have a first division fixture with Harlequins on the same day. Even though the XV for that game contains three internationals and a B international, "Wasps will be without nine players required by England."

They will be entitled, therefore, to reduce the status of the game to a friendly and I think they may be wise to do so and leave open their option for rearranging the fixture later in the season. They will be thinking, too, of subsequent club championship matches which clash with senior or B internationals — the games against Gloucester and Coventry — where they seem bound to lose a proportion of their players.

The other first division match on the day of the trial is that between Wasps and Sale, who are badly affected by representative calls. Sale lose Bentley, their centre, but will be relieved to have Tipping available in their back row and Whitcombe in their front row. Wasps, whose unbeaten record fell to Roundhay at the weekend, will be without Gallagher, their flanker, who had a hairline fracture just below the knee.

The selection of the two trial XV's is a promising contrast with some of the predecessors in recent years. At one stage the England panel made a habit of looking at players in combination — such as club or county half-backs, midfield duos or trio, club locks and props: I would suggest that a feature of the two teams for January 2 is that they are full of footballing individuals.

In some cases the selectors have been aiming to put established combinations — the obvious example is Melville and

Andrew who, even if they have not played much together this season, have done so for Wasps, Yorkshire and the North in the past. The point is that, if players are good enough, they will cope and if you have good men around you, it helps. Everyone makes mistakes. The point of the coaching exercise is to try and minimize the mistakes."

It will be particularly instructive to see Dave in the company of the two Wasps, Rendall and Probyn. There have been some grim struggles between the front rows representing Bath and Wasps in recent seasons and it will be good to see if Dave, the Bath hooker, has matured sufficiently to play effectively with two men who have been so often — including in the last cup final — among his greatest rivals. His restoration to the England side ahead of Moore will depend upon it.

It appears that Geoff Cooke, the England manager, had decided to pick his best two XV's for the trial but, when it comes to selection for A and B internationals over the same weekend, six of his second XV will be the replacements for the senior side. Thus, for instance, Harding seems unlikely to appear in the B international with France

on January 16; if, for the sake of example, one assumes Melville will resume his international career at the Parc des Princes (where it appeared to have ended in 1986), then it will be invaluable to have international experience of Harding in reserve. This would leave the B place for Robson (Moseley) or Holmes (Sheffield), who are the number three and four scrum-halfs.

Likewise, the hooking job in the B XV would appear to be between Oliver, the Harlequin who played in the divisional championship, and Duas (Gloucester) who did not. I hope, though, that consideration will be given here to two other candidates: Simmons, who sustained a serious injury playing for Wasps in November which put him out of the divisional reckoning yet who made a tremendous impression in the B international with

Robert's, Leicester hooker, who has been part of a technically-excellent club pack and who was good enough, before arriving in this country, to earn Springbok trials.

Adamson pushed aside

Lee Adamson returns at Northampton on Boxing Day although the impressive form of Dean Ryan, the No. 8, means the Saracens captain, unavailable for the past two matches, moves to the second row.

Ryan, an Army and Combined Services representative, was playing at flanker until Adamson's absence saw him emerge as a dominant No. 8. Saracens also have three players making debuts — Dave

Brewitt, the scrum half, Ian Moore, the prop, and Chris Matthews, the second row, while Lawrence Smith returns after a long absence after playing for London in the divisional championship.

Coventry recall three players for the Boxing Day derby against Moseley. Lee Johnson and Graham Robbins return from divisional duty and Steve Thomas is back at scrum half after missing Saturday's defeat of Gloucester.

DIVING

A meeting of champions

By Roy Moor

Bobby Morgan, the British high-dive champion who is making such an impact on international diving, will find himself matched against the world and Olympic champion, Greg Louganis of the United States, when the competitors in New Zealand and Australia next month.

This is just the sort of competition Bobby needs to bring the best out of him," said Chris Snode, England's former Commonwealth champion, who is playing an important role in Morgan's development.

Knowing from his own experience the value of sunshine training and competition during Britain's winter months, Snode is hoping that Carolyn Roscoe and Jeff Arbon, also contenders for Olympic selection, will accompany Morgan on the Australasian circuit.

"Whereas Carolyn and Jeff are able to provide some of the cost from the Minnet training grants from the Sports Aid foundation, we still need to find around £2,000 for both of them to make the trip," said Snode. "We would welcome any offers of assistance."

Morgan, clearly a strong medal prospect for Seoul next year, will leave on January 5 for a training camp in Brisbane, before competing in Sydney and then going to New Zealand for his first clash with Louganis.

He will dive against the world's No. 1 again at Canberra towards the end of January. His build-up for Seoul will also include competition against more of the world's best divers in Munich, Minsk and Rostock.

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Boxing Day with The Times

The Times will be publishing on Boxing Day this year. There will be a complete up-to-date card for all eight race meetings on Boxing Day and a full guide to the football and rugby that day. As well as a full Saturday section with all the regular contributors, there will be a Jumbo Crossword, a Christmas Quiz, complete weekend television and radio and entertainment listings.

To ensure you receive your Boxing Day Times, complete this coupon and give it to your newsagent today

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TENNIS

Connors getting down to business

From Linda Pentz
New York

Jimmy Connors, who reigned as the world's No. 1 from 1974 to 1978 and who has accumulated 105 singles titles, refuses to hang up his racket despite not having won a tournament since an event in Tokyo in October 1984.

Connors, aged 35, who was knocked out of the Nabisco Masters this year without winning a match, said: "I was an animal carrier in my career. I was the one that had - what's it called when you foam at the mouth? - rabies. I had rabies. I'm still an animal but different. Before, that was the way I wanted it. I've bitten a lot of people along the way and I don't need to bite them any more."

Whereas Connors used to carry his competitive energy around 24 hours a day, he now balances his life with other interests. "I'm only mentally into it when I'm out there playing," Connors said. "That's never been my game. I've always been into it from when I get up in the morning until the match is over."

"For me now I lead three different lives. First my family, then my tennis, then my business," Connors is married to the former Pat McEnroe and has two young children, a son, Brett, and a daughter, Andrew Leigh.

Connors' career has spanned almost two decades, and he is at times a little nostalgic for the "good old days" and welcomed the appearance of his good friend, the Nastase, as a dinner companion during the Masters week.

"There's no bigger character than Nastase," Connors said. "Whether you like him or whether you don't, he brings people out. Now it's boring."

Connors, who is still ranked No. 4 in the world, misses the camaraderie of the 1970s but is not sure the big money in tennis is to blame for its absence now.

"When we all first grew up we played the game because we loved it," Connors said. "We didn't think the world owed us a living. That was when the big money first came around and we didn't know how long it would last."

"It's a different breed now than before. Now the players feel like they deserve it. When I was a kid, that's not a lot of good talent out there. There is a lot."

Connors also believes the younger players' view of the



Connors: three separate lives world in which they travel can be insular. "I don't know that a lot of guys do understand what's going on, but when I was young I don't know that I did either," he said.

"As you get older you broaden your scope of things. I think athletes in general, and tennis players in particular, become very conscious. I hope they do as far as what goes on."

Earlier in the year, Connors said he might consider retiring his contemporaries who have graduated to the 35-and-over tour. But he is still too much of a factor in the major ranks to switch course in 1988. He will not curtail his playing plans next year despite a foot injury which inhibited his performances in the latter part of this year.

"I have to play eight tournaments next year which is good," Connors said. "But I'll probably play more than that. I'll probably play 12 to 15 tournaments."

In the meantime, Connors has made a conscious effort to build business connections which will provide him with employment when his playing days are over. "There are a number of opportunities I'm looking into," he said. "The difficulty is finding one I can give my best effort to, to do in that what I've done in tennis. I haven't been able to sink my teeth into one area."

Ideally, Connors hopes to find a business which focuses on human relations. "Dealing with people would be good," Connors said. "I enjoy it. I think I've learned to deal with people."

Connors, who spent a year in university at UCLA before turning professional, also thinks today's young tennis professionals are less prepared for a future beyond the professional tour.

"That's a problem," he said. "A lot of young players don't finish their education. But the chance of really making it on the tour are slim at best."

However, Connors, who prides himself on being something of a self-made man, is against special schooling for players to help prepare them for other careers. He said: "You can't give them everything. They have to do something on their own."

In summing up his career, which he hastens to add is not yet over, Connors steals a scene from another, somewhat older, campaigner, Frank Sinatra.

"I had a ball, I really did," he said. "I had a good time. I did it the way I wanted to and took the pain on the back when they were there, and took the criticism when it was there. And I wasn't used to own up to anything I've ever done, or ever will do, period."

In his reflections on an ill-starred Pakistan tour John Woodcock laments the damage done to the game



Flashpoint at Faisalabad: The moment when an unhappy England tour became bitterly controversial as Gatting and Shakoor Rana become embroiled in an infamous confrontation (Photograph: Graham Morris).

Final curtain brings relief all round

England's cricketers flew home yesterday, the Pakistan leg of their winter's cricket finished. If they were thankful it was over, so were their hosts, and that is a sad reflection.

To the extent that a tour is what a side sets out to make of it, this one was never likely to be a resounding success. The World Cup was different, being well organized and enthusiastically supported. Had England won it, which they very nearly did, they would have covered themselves with glory. The whole experience was as pleasant a surprise as the last six weeks have been frequently unpalatable.

Even the first match of England's Pakistan tour, a three-day game in Rawalpindi, was made to seem a chore. It was the same at Sahiwal in the only other fixture that was not either a Test match or a one-day international. The almost daily changes to the itinerary, even though some of them were to be welcomed, were meat and drink to the cynics.

To have to play three more one-day internationals almost immediately after the World Cup was not at all the new beginning that was needed. After Pakistan's defeat in the World Cup semi-final and the retirement of Imran Khan, the

crowds had already dwindled to nothing.

Then came the lethal combination of Abdul Qadir's bowling, some hopelessly bad umpiring and the England manager's *cri de coeur* ("give us a square deal") during the first Test match in Lahore. From then on it was every man for himself, the atmosphere conducive to goodwill and good cricket as a splitting headache.

The only sides on tour, whether to Pakistan or anywhere else, who are generally satisfied with the umpiring are those that win. It was ever thus. In Australia, in 1954-55, Len Hutton's victorious team thought Mel McInnes was just about the best umpire in the world; four years later Peter May's side, which lost, were hard-pressed to find a good word to say for him.

In Australia last winter England lost only the Sydney Test match; two years before, in India, they only lost in Bombay. Only in those two Tests did they think the umpiring was anything other than perfectly good. I could fill the page with similar examples.

In Pakistan there are two ways of looking at things - the Tony Lewis way and the Tom Graveney way. Lewis writes: "I recall leading England in

TOUR AVERAGES

Batting and fielding

	M	I	N	R	HS	100	50	Ave	CFR
J E Embury	4	7	3	216	74	1	2	55.00	1
P T Robinson	4	7	3	201	118	1	2	50.25	1
A J Gooch	3	6	0	225	83	1	2	37.50	1
C W J Athey	3	6	0	225	101	1	2	37.50	1
B N French	3	6	0	147	45	0	2	24.50	10/1
S C Broad	3	6	0	147	45	0	2	24.50	10/1
D J Capel	3	6	0	141	79	0	2	23.57	1
M W Gatting	3	6	0	141	79	0	2	23.57	1
E E Hemmings	3	6	0	35	34	0	2	17.50	1
N H Pothor	3	6	0	35	34	0	2	17.50	1
P A J DeFreitas	3	6	0	79	25	0	2	13.33	1
N G R Cook	3	6	0	72	32	0	2	12.00	1
N A Foster	3	6	0	40	29	0	2	10.00	1
P W Jarvis	3	6	0	40	29	0	2	10.00	1
G R Dillie	3	6	0	40	29	0	2	10.00	1
C G Russell	3	6	0	40	29	0	2	10.00	1

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Bowling

	Over	Mid	Run	Wk	BS	5	Ave
N A Foster	44	10	104	8	4-42	1	12.33
P A J DeFreitas	64	14	185	9	5-39	1	21.55
B N French	129	46	277	10	6-77	1	27.70
E E Hemmings	61	17	170	8	4-70	1	21.33
J E Embury	134	50	278	18	5-49	1	24.75
N H Pothor	45	7	172	4	2-46	0	43.00
P A J DeFreitas	17	2	51	1	1-51	0	51.00
D W Jarvis	30	7	206	4	3-48	1	51.00
G R Dillie	1	0	0	0	0-0	0	-
B C Broad	2	1	21	0	0-0	0	-
N A Foster	1	0	0	0	0-0	0	-
A J Gooch	2	1	4	0	0-0	0	-

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Pakistan in 1973. The umpiring was unsatisfactory but unbiased." Graveney says: "Pakistan have been cheating us for 35 years."

Having, for my sins, reported more tours of Pakistan than anyone else from England, I have always preferred the Lewis view, partly because it is infinitely more useful. I do so now it is with less confidence, mainly because at Faisalabad it was hard not to

think of Shakoor Rana as a puppet, put in to pick a quarrel with an England side that had accused the umpires of cheating in Lahore.

Let it be accepted, then, that England found strong evidence of the provocation they had been looking for. It was depressing that they should, but the time soon came when they did. The Test and County Cricket Board had asked for

trouble, albeit unwittingly, when it insisted upon appointing David Constant, much against Pakistan's wishes, to umpire two of the Tests in England last summer. That, together with the customary incompetence of the umpires in Pakistan, England's susceptibility on the subject and the fact that Mike Gatting's is not a good side, brought us to the edge of the precipice.

MOTOR SPORT

Brands Hatch ponder legal challenge

By Andrew Longmore

The next round in the continuing battle between Brands Hatch and Silverstone over the future of the British grand prix looks set to take place in the European law courts. Brands Hatch Leisure plc, which owns Brands and four other British circuits, is considering taking legal action against FISA, the head of world motor sport, after its decision last week to make Silverstone the 1988 venue.

But John Webb, chief executive of Brands Hatch, has stressed that any action would be aimed at overturning that decision but at ensuring that Brands hosted the grand prix for the following year, or even two years.

East Grinstead, the holders, face moderate opposition from Richmond, Sheffield and Doncaster in the Royal Bank national indoor club championship at four centres on January 31. However, St Albans, last year's runners up, are in more formidable company with Farnham, Southampton and Southport.

DRIVE: Cambridge Pool is East Grinstead, Richmond, Sheffield, Doncaster, Pool 2 at St Albans, Farnham, Southampton, Southport, Worcester, Pool 3 at Worcester, Pool 4 at Worcester, Pool 5 at Worcester, Pool 6 at Worcester, Pool 7 at Worcester, Pool 8 at Worcester, Pool 9 at Worcester, Pool 10 at Worcester, Pool 11 at Worcester, Pool 12 at Worcester, Pool 13 at Worcester, Pool 14 at Worcester, Pool 15 at Worcester, Pool 16 at Worcester, Pool 17 at Worcester, Pool 18 at Worcester, Pool 19 at Worcester, Pool 20 at Worcester, Pool 21 at Worcester, Pool 22 at Worcester, Pool 23 at Worcester, Pool 24 at Worcester, Pool 25 at Worcester, Pool 26 at Worcester, Pool 27 at Worcester, Pool 28 at Worcester, Pool 29 at Worcester, Pool 30 at Worcester, Pool 31 at Worcester, Pool 32 at Worcester, Pool 33 at Worcester, Pool 34 at Worcester, Pool 35 at Worcester, Pool 36 at Worcester, Pool 37 at Worcester, Pool 38 at Worcester, Pool 39 at Worcester, Pool 40 at Worcester, Pool 41 at Worcester, Pool 42 at 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Pakistan inquiry likely to start soon

The England captain, Mike Gatting, tour manager Peter Lush and team manager Mickey Stewart will be called to Lord's before the end of the year to give verbal reports on the controversial tour of Pakistan.

On his arrival at London Airport last night Lush admitted that it was "not a good thing" to play the same opponents, home and away, in successive series.

Pakistan visited England last summer and have been almost constant opponents for Gatting and his team for the

World Cup they would have been heroes.

Lush confirmed that it was the right of Pakistan to refuse England an extra day in the Faisalabad Test they could have won. "They had the right of refusal and spent half a day thinking about it. It would have been nice if they had granted it."

Gatting is still indignant about events in the Faisalabad Test.

"I have never been sworn at like that on the cricket field, and certainly never called a cheat," said Gatting. "That was the fuse that sparked the row that ruined the Test."

Gatting added: "Perhaps I was unwise to become involved with Umpire Shakoor Rana, but at the time I had my say and told him to get back to square-leg and carry on doing his job."

His vice-captain, John Emburey, said: "The second Test row had its origin in the first Test, when we were upset by several umpiring decisions. I was not surprised that Gatting went over the top in the circumstances."

Gatting came home admitting to "a few more grey hairs" and said that he had lost a great deal of sleep in the last two weeks. When he arrives at his North London home, he will have more than routine Christmas cards to open.

His wife Elaine told him that there were bundles of letters of support for his actions.

"It was very gratifying to know that England followers were on our side, and I also appreciated the players insisting on their controversial statement that added to the truth being known," Gatting said.

Stewart said the England players had taken a chance in insisting their versions of events be known. "If the circumstances had been normal, the players would have been in trouble. But they were not normal circumstances," he said.

Pressure growing for Imran return

Karachi (AFP) — Hasib Ahsan, Pakistan's chief selector, said yesterday that he hoped that Imran Khan would come out of retirement in March to lead the side to the West Indies.

Newspaper reports in Pakistan of Misand's desire to give up the captaincy have been linked with a possible return by Imran. If he does not resume his international career, Abdul Qadir and Mianusar Nazir are candidates for the captaincy, although Qadir could well miss the tour because he faces treatment for the removal of a kidney stone.

Last seven months. It now seems likely that the England's tour programme will be reviewed, and probably changed, to avoid any repetition in the future.

Lush said the TOCB's refusal to remove David Constant from the Test panel when asked to do so last season had been a major factor when England tried to change the officials in Pakistan. Lush said: "I have no doubt that it played an important part in the discussions about the umpires. They kept referring to it."

Peter May, the chairman of selectors, contended, "If the team had come home after the

Another first at Folkestone but £275,000 still in balance



Hot off to himself: Barney Curley acknowledges the Folkestone applause after Experimenting became his tenth winner (Photograph: Stephen Markeson)

Ten-win Curley at last hurdle

By Christopher Gossling

Barney Curley, the controversial trainer and fearless gambler, is on the brink of landing the biggest gamble of his life. The intrepid Irishman has backed himself to train 10 winners before the end of the year and stands to win £275,000.

Yesterday at Folkestone, he achieved that feat when Experimenting came home the easy winner of the Selling Handicap Hurdle. As the winner took up the running in jumping the last hurdle, the bookmakers and public were shouting "Come on Barney". Never has there been such a reception at the Kent course.

But before Curley can celebrate his triumph, he has to face the stewards of the Jockey Club at Portman Square today. Keith Stone, the trainer of Salskia's Reprive, the runner-up to Curley's Doncaster winner, Assultan, has appealed to the Jockey Club to reverse the controversial decision.

Curley is unperturbed about the inquiry at Portman Square and will not be legally represented. If the stewards decide to throw out Assultan, Curley said: "The bet will have to go to Tattersalls Committee to

Curley's 10 winners

Oct 1: Fontwell Park: Above All Hopes (O Murphy), 1-4 fav.
Oct 6: Southwell: Above All Hopes (O Murphy), 6-4 fav.
Nov 5: Wolverhampton: Saryan (O Murphy), 15-1.
Nov 24: Southwell: Aveo Coeur (V Kennedy), even fav.
Nov 28: Market Rasen: Uriel Et Ori (V Kennedy), 5-1 fav.
Dec 4: Bangor: Experimenting (O Murphy), 6-4 fav.
Dec 7: Catterick: Golden Display (O Murphy), 32-1.
Dec 12: Doncaster: Assultan (O Murphy), 6-4.
Dec 21: Towcester: Salvant (O Murphy), even fav.
Dec 22: Folkestone: Experimenting (O Murphy), 6-4 fav.
Winners last season: nine

be decided." He considers the Doncaster stewards' verdict to be very fair. "And it was my horse that got badly bumped twice."

Curley, who has always had a quick eye for a gamble, said after his victory: "I will be prepared to leave a stake of £401,000 on the table if anybody can lay me a bet to train another 10 winners in the next three months. The bookies have the weather in their

favour but I am on the phone if anyone is interested."

The Irishman is reputed to have won £250,000 on a bet in 1976 in Ireland. He took the same amount from the bookmakers after Reference Point had won this year's Derby, and he also landed substantial wagers at Royal Ascot in the summer.

When Curley left Ireland two and a half years ago, the Irishman thought of a novel way to sell his horse and training stables, Middleton Lodge. He organized a sale through raffle tickets, but landed himself in court as his idea was not registered. The raffle made worldwide news but the Irish Government did not approve of the idea and suggested he paid the fine of £5,000 to a charity. The ever-thoughtful Curley doubled it.

Last jump season, Curley had a wager of £12,000 on Robin Good-fellow at Ascot but the horse was beaten into third place. This prompted the Jockey Club to hold an inquiry and Curley expressed his feelings about the jockey riding in the race. No action was taken regarding the jockey, Graham Radley, and the trainer, Toby Balding. But Curley's training licence was withdrawn

because the Jockey Club considered he had brought the name of racing into disrepute.

Curley was outraged by the decision and was prepared to take the matter to the High Court. The Jockey Club then held a second hearing and the outcome was that Curley was given his licence back after two and a half months.

He is a man of strong religious beliefs, having learned his philosophy from the Jesuits. At the age of 20, he confessed he nearly died of tuberculosis.

Bookies and punters cheered him to the echo at Folkestone yesterday, first as Experimenting passed the winning post six lengths clear of Matelot Royale, then as the trainer entered the winners' enclosure, and again when he retained Experimenting at the auction for 4,500 guineas.

On leaving the racetrack at Folkestone and catching a train to London to face the stewards of the Jockey Club, Curley said: "It is tremendous how the public have latched on to my bet. I think it's good for racing." He has two or more strings to his bow, his next intended runner being Mr Kirby at Wetherby on Boxing Day.

END COLUMN

End of big time for great captain

By George Aco

It is usually fatal to assume anything in Irish rugby before an announcement emanating from the lofty portals of Lansdowne Road. But all the pundits are that Ciaran Fintona Fitzgerald, captain extraordinary, has played his last game for Ireland.

Last Saturday morning Fitzgerald was the lynchpin of many to lead the Blues (Possibles) to a victory over the Whites (Probables) in the final Irish trial and come back for the third time to lead Ireland yet again in the Five Nations championship.

It did not quite work out that way and come Sunday morning Fitzgerald's name did not even figure in a list which comprised the team and substitutes for the match against Scotland next month at Lansdowne Road and since others making up a squad of 30 for a two-day training session in Dublin on January 2 and 3.

But knowing Fitzgerald, I do not think he would have been very disappointed with the turn of events. On the wrong side of 35 years of age, he had already carved a niche in Irish rugby history that will stand the test of time. He was more international than he looked in a career that started in Australia in 1979 and stretched to the final match against Scotland in 1986 — 25 caps later.

In 1983 Fitzgerald captained the British Lions in New Zealand, a difficult tour in many ways and one that the manager, Willie John McBride, recalled yesterday thus: "It is one of my greatest regrets that that tour was not more successful if only for Ciaran's sake. His selection was severely criticized in some quarters and something of a vendetta was carried on against him right from the start."

Fitzgerald carved a niche start of the tour. All that achieved was to supply the New Zealand Press with the ammunition to start knocking the Lions from day one.

"Fitz was one of the great captains of this or any other era in Irish rugby. He radiated enthusiasm, knew precisely what he wanted in pre-match preparation and on the field of play. Two Triple Crowns in a space of four years speaks volumes to that outstanding ability."

Fitzgerald first came to prominence as a captain in 1977 when he led an Ireland B side to victory over Scotland B in Edinburgh. He was on the Ireland tour party for Australia in 1979 and played in both internationals when Pat Whelan was ruled out with a back injury and won four more caps the following year.

He was not selected in 1981 but the following year had bounced back, took over the captaincy relinquished by Slattery, and promptly led Ireland to a first Triple Crown success since 1948. Fitzgerald clinched his captaincy of the Lions by leading Ireland to three wins in 1983 over Scotland, France and England.

In 1984 he sustained a bad eye injury against Wales and although pronounced fit for the game against England the selectors decided to stay with Harrison.

But Fitzgerald, in full view of the Irish selectors, had an outstanding game for Connacht against Munster at Thomond Park and was again named as Ireland's captain for the match against Australia towards the end of 1984. He achieved his second Triple Crown success in 1985 and an outright Five Nations championship.

He was still at the helm the following year when Ireland were whitewashed and spent last season on the substitutes' bench before announcing his unavailability for World Cup selection 24 hours after Ireland had defeated Wales in the final match in the championship in April.

The Irish caused a slight surprise when they invited Fitzgerald to attend a special training session for forwards only some weeks ago; surprised no one when they selected him as captain of the Blues in the final trial and in all probability left him out of the team against Scotland on the grounds that even for the Irish a front row of Fitzgerald, Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald would just be too much.

Scotland pursue Rice

Clive Rice, aged 38, the South African all-rounder, who announced his retirement from English cricket at the end of last season, is set to return to the county scene next summer — as a member of Scotland's Benson and Hedges cup team.

Scotland are allowed to field one overseas cricketer under the rules of the one-day competition, and Robert Barclay, secretary of the Scottish Cricket Union, said yesterday: "We understand Clive will be in Britain at the time and is

interested in playing for us. Our opening Benson and Hedges game will be on April 26, but Clive will then be fresh from the South African domestic season.

Rice's fellow South African, Omar Henry, has been Scotland's official overseas player since 1984. But Henry, who has a home in Scotland and plays club cricket for Stenhousemuir, will probably be forced on to the sidelines if Rice signs on.

Rochdale close to ground sale deal

By Keith Macklin

Rochdale Hornets are expecting to receive within the next few days the most welcome Christmas present of all, a massive cash injection.

The struggling second division Rugby League club, heavily in debt and trying to exist on gates of under 1,000, are on the verge of completing a deal with Bovis, the builders, which will give Hornets £1.5 million for the sale of the Athletic Grounds for commercial development.

If the agreement goes through as expected Hornets will be able to clear their debts of more than £300,000. With the remainder of the money they have to decide between building a new ground or entering into a ground-sharing scheme with Rochdale Football Club at Spotland.

Hornets have already looked at several sites on local council land with a view to

building a new ground there. However, once the deal with Bovis goes through Hornets will take time to consider all the available options.

Widnes, the first division leaders, are so keen to retain their leadership against the challenge of second-placed Warrington that they are having special training sessions before Sunday's match between the two teams at Loughton Park. Duggie Laughton, the coach, has asked players to come in for training on Christmas Eve and Boxing Day, and the players readily accepted the instructions.

Swinton have placed their leading try scorer, Tex Evans, on the transfer list at a fee of £45,000. Evans, a bustling winger, asked Swinton to provide him with a car to travel to training sessions and this was rejected.

Germans back Becker over boycott issue

Bonn (AFP) — Boris Becker has received full backing from his own West German tennis federation after suggestions that African countries might boycott next year's Seoul Olympics because the twice Wimbledon champion once played in South Africa.

The federation said in a statement yesterday that it was unfair to blame Becker for playing in the tournament in 1983 when he was only 15.

The federation said it had followed international practice when sending Becker and

other players to junior tournaments in South Africa in 1982 and 1983 and added: "We will support Becker should certain African countries carry out their threat to boycott the Games."

Meanwhile, Becker will meet Ivan Lendl in Frankfurt on January 31 in one of three exhibition matches against the world No. 1 to prepare his comeback in the Davis Cup first round tie against Brazil in Essen on February 5. Becker has pulled out of the Australian Open from January 11 to 21 because of knee trouble.

Birmingham united

Birmingham, unsuccessful contenders to stage the 1992 Olympics Games, will go ahead with a bid to host the Games in 1996. The decision was taken at a special meeting of the City Council on Monday night, and was supported by both the controlling Labour and opposition Conservative groups.

An earlier meeting to decide on a bid broke up in confusion

when the Conservatives demanded spending limits on the campaign, but at the latest meeting councillor Reg Hales, the Tory leader, said his party was satisfied with the safeguards which had been introduced. Denis Howell, the Labour MP and former Minister for Sport, said: "I am obviously delighted that the city is back on course with all-party support."

Jumbo sporting crossword

Make it a sporting Christmas by testing your sports knowledge in *The Times/Whitbread Jumbo crossword* tomorrow. The ten prize-winners will each receive a magnificent Whitbread Hamper.

Financial deadline for Pleat

By Dennis Signy

David Pleat should clarify his financial settlement with his former club, Tottenham Hotspur, today.

Pleat, who resigned his £75,000-a-year position as manager of Tottenham in October following newspaper allegations about his private life, has understood, been seeking "substantial compensation" for the loss of his job.

Although Pleat resigned his position half-way through a three-year contract, Tottenham have made him an offer they consider "generous" in recognition of his work last season, when the side finished third in the League, were runners-up in the FA Cup, and reached the semi-finals of the Littlewoods Cup.

But unless Pleat accepts the offer by this afternoon it will be withdrawn.

Villa men decline holiday transfers

By Chris Moore

Aston Villa last night missed out on a possible £1million Christmas windfall when Mark Walters and Neale Cooper elected to remain at Villa Park, at least for the time being.

Walters, whom Villa value at £750,000 but do not want to lose, informed Watford he would not make up his mind about joining them until after the holiday.

Cooper was the surprise subject of a £250,000 offer from Dundee United. It would have recouped the fee Villa paid Aberdeen for the Scottish international mid-fielder 18 months ago. But the player, whose stay at Villa Park has been dogged by a succession of long-term injuries, expressed little interest in a return to Scotland at this time.

"He does not want to move and we have to respect those feelings," Graham Taylor, the

Villa manager, said. "I think he feels he has won most, if not all, of the medals Scotland has to offer."

Walters, however, could yet depart before the end of the year, although his reluctance to jump at Watford's offer, following talks with the first division club's manager, Dave Bassett, on Monday, hardens opinion that he would prefer a move.

Taylor now concedes there is little more he can do to hold on to the England Under-21 international. "As far as financial inducements go, he has received our final offer," Taylor said.

Bassett said: "Obviously the takeover and our League situation are stumbling blocks. We would like to sign him to improve our League position and hopefully things will become clearer with regards to the sale of the club by the time Christmas is over."

SPORT IN BRIEF

Rates cut for Celtic

Celtic, the Scottish premier division leaders, have had their rates bill at Parkhead reduced by £32,000 from £120,000.

The success of Celtic's appeal to cut their charges to £88,000 will please the Scottish FA and the Scottish League, who are meeting soon to consider their next move in a continuing battle against the rates for other Scottish football clubs, including Heart of Midlothian and Hibernian who had both previously appealed without success.

Light of Cup

Sutton United and Middlesbrough have agreed on a 2 p.m. kick-off for their FA Cup third-round tie on January 9. A 5,000 crowd limit has been ordered by the Sutton council but the GM Vauxhall Conference club is appealing for the figure to be increased.

Spain fixture

Scotland's extensive build-up to the 1990 World Cup in Italy will take them to Madrid in April to face Spain in the Bernabeu stadium as part of an eight-match preparation before the start of the qualifying series next autumn.

Ellis feature

Jeff Harding and Barry Ellis, the London heavyweight, will top the card on promoter Gary Davidson's Hornsey Town Hall boxing show on January 20.

Early France

Paris (AFP) — France will announce their team for the opening five nations Rugby Union championship match against England at the Parc des Princes on January 6, 10 days before the international.

Expenses paid

Bristol Rovers have agreed to kick-off against Southend United at 11.30 a.m. on Monday at Roots Hall. Southend will receive £750 to cover hotel expenses.

Good recovery

Wayne Clarke, the Everton forward, and Pat van den Hauwe, the defender, have resumed training and could now play over the holiday.

Canada class

Moscow (Renter) — Canada won the Izvestia Cup ice hockey tournament by beating Finland 4-1 yesterday to record their fourth successive victory.

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